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GARETH WYN JONES

FOREWORD FROM THE GUEST EDITOR

As a Welsh hill farmer, I've come to appreciate the vital role that airguns play in effective pest control on farms across the UK. Over the years, I've witnessed firsthand how these precision tools can make a significant difference in managing wildlife populations that threaten farmers' livestock and crops.

Airguns offer a unique combination of accuracy, quietness and cost-effectiveness that makes them indispensable for many farmers and pest control professionals. I am a huge fan. Their low-impact nature allows for targeted pest management without disturbing livestock or causing undue stress to the surrounding environment.

One of the most compelling aspects of airgun use in pest control is its versatility. Whether dealing with rodents in grain stores or managing feral pigeon populations in barns, airguns provide a flexible solution that can be adapted to various situations. This adaptability is crucial on a working farm, where pest problems can arise suddenly and in diverse contexts.

The use of airguns also comes with significant responsibilities: proper training, adherence to safety protocols and a thorough understanding of relevant legislation are non-negotiable prerequisites for anyone using them.

As we look to the future of farming and wildlife management, I believe that airguns will continue to play a crucial role. Their low environmental impact and precision make them an ideal choice for sustainable pest control practices. However, we must also remain open to innovations and new technologies that can further enhance our ability to manage pests responsibly.

My own experiences have shown me that airguns, when used responsibly and skilfully, are an invaluable asset in the farmer's toolkit. They represent a balance between effectiveness and environmental stewardship – a balance that is becoming increasingly important in modern agriculture.

As we continue to face challenges in food production and wildlife management, the humble airgun stands as a testament to the ingenuity and adaptability of farmers and pest control professionals alike.

I hope that you enjoy this issue of *Airgun World*.

GARETH WYN JONES

JANUARY 2025

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SEE PAGE 76 FOR MORE DETAILS

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AIRGUN WORLD

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IN FOCUS

Guest editor Gareth Wyn Jones has been shooting with airguns since the age of 10 and he admits to being "obsessed" with his .22 Webley & Scott Eagle PCP (pictured). Look out for Dave Barham's review of this air rifle in the February 2025 issue of *Airgun World*, and for more airgun reviews from leading figures in the industry, simply scan this QR code.

PHOTOGRAPH: **COURTESY OF HIGHLAND OUTDOORS**

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LAW

HOME OFFICE URGES DISPOSAL OF NON-COMPLIANT BLANK-FIRING PISTOLS

The Home Office has ruled that certain varieties of top-venting, blank-firing pistols are too easily convertible into prohibited handguns capable of firing live ammunition.

On this basis, these pistols have been deemed illegal under current Government legislation.

This decision has been made under the terms of the Firearms Act 1982, which stipulates that imitation or blank-firing firearms may only be possessed without a licence if they are not readily convertible into live-firing firearms.

The National Crime Agency has found that criminals are converting top-venting, blank-firing pistols into live-firing pistols, and identified this issue as one of the most significant firearms threats.

The previously unlicensed firearms, which will now be classified as Section 5 firearms under the Firearms Act 1968, are specifically top-venting, blank-firing pistols manufactured in Turkey by any of the following companies: RETAY, EKOL, CEONIC and BLOW.

The National Crime Agency recently commissioned an accredited expert to undertake forensic examination in Durham Firearms Classification and Examination Laboratory, and found that the aforementioned firearms are "readily convertible" and therefore should be classified as "weapons subject to general prohibition".

The Government wishes to ensure that these firearms, which may have previously been legally used for bird scaring or dog training, are removed from circulation and that current owners have the opportunity to dispose of them safely. The National Police Chiefs' Council has said that it intends to hold an amnesty during which owners can hand these firearms into police stations.

The amnesty will run for four weeks from 3 February 2025 across all police forces in England and Wales.

No compensation will be paid by the Government for firearms that are handed over during or before the amnesty on the basis that they have been found to be illegal and contrary to current legislation.

BASC's head of firearms, Martin Parker told *Airgun World*: "We would advise anyone who has a blank-firing pistol to check it. If it is one of the types identified by the Home Office, BASC would therefore advise that you take advantage of the amnesty or destroy it.

"Any BASC members who are unsure as to the current status of their blank-firing gun, who want more information about how to surrender it in the amnesty or alternatively find out more about destroying a firearm, can simply contact the BASC Firearms Team for advice."

TARGET

MARTLEY CRICKET CLUB ADOPTS TWO NEW AIR RIFLE TEAMS

Martley Cricket Club in Worcestershire's Malvern Hills is the new home of two air rifle teams that will use the club during the close season.

The teams used to shoot at a Martley pub that has temporarily closed. The closure has led the teams to move homes and pitch their shooting club at the grounds on the B4197 every Thursday night.

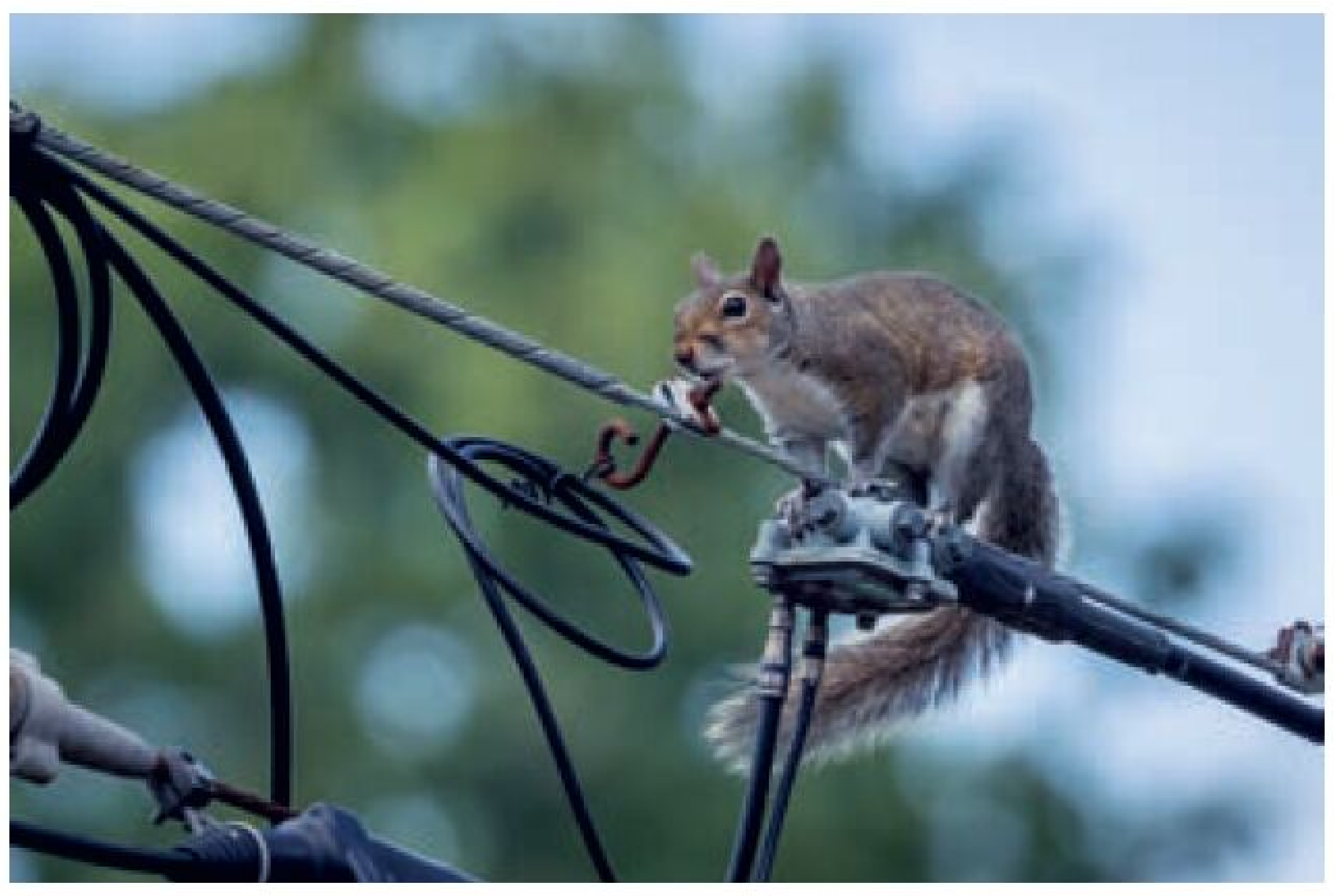
One of the teams is comprised solely of women, leading the club to speculate that it could be one of the few to house an all-female shooting team. Wendy Davies, the club secretary, said: "We are really happy with our new home venue. We have been made very welcome and hope it will encourage more people to come along and try our sport in a village community."

The team shoots in the 100-year-old Lord Ednam League, a league which uses .177 airguns to shoot at metal targets.

Dave Bradley, the Martley Cricket Club president, said: "It's great to have the teams in the heart of the village. My dad shot in the league for over 50 years for the Martley side, so we are more than happy to get the teams involved at the new pavilion. Eight other teams are involved in the league, and ironically the first match at the club saw the women's team at home to the men. We have been asked not to publish the result."

PESTS

NGO LAUNCHES ACCREDITED SQUIRREL CONTROL COURSES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The grant aims to engage and enable land managers to increase grey squirrel culls

The National Gamekeepers' Organisation (NGO) is now able to offer a Lantra-accredited grey squirrel control course which meets the training requirements for the WS3 squirrel control grant.

Under the Government's WS3 grant, landowners are able to claim financial support for undertaking squirrel control as part of their woodland conservation efforts.

The grey squirrel control grant is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier, with payments of £60 per hectare of qualifying woodland.

There are a certain number of requirements related to the grant, including the need for grey squirrel control training.

The NGO can offer a Lantra-accredited grey squirrel control course, one that meets these training requirements, at a cost of £200 for an NGO member, or £225 for non-members. The course takes approximately four hours to complete and features a combination of theory and practical lessons. After completion of the training, candidates will receive a Lantra Awards Certificate in Grey Squirrel Control, a certificate which is suitable for the purpose of the WS3 grant.

The Government has stated that the end goal for the grant is to engage and enable land managers to increase the cull of grey squirrels throughout their woodlands across the country.

COMPETITION

WORLD UNIVERSITY SHOOTING CHAMPIONSHIPS WON BY 0.1 POINTS

NEW DELHI 2024 FISU WORLD UNIVERSITY CHAMPIONSHIP SHO

The podium finishers, topped by Jiri Privratsky of the Czech Republic

Smit Moradiya almost pulled off a coup, but was pipped by 0.1 points for gold by the seasoned Jiri Privratsky of the Czech Republic in the 10-metre air rifle event at the World University Shooting Championships.

The event, which was staged at the Dr Karni Singh Range in the Tughlakabad district of Delhi in India, saw well-known Indian shooters Umamahesh Maddineni and Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar pushed out of the medal positions into fourth and fifth by their little-known compatriot Smit Moradiya, who shot brilliantly in the final stages of the competition.

The lesser known Smit shot his best scores in the climax, winding up the last round with a 10.8 that stimulated huge applause from the crowd. It wasn't quite enough to bring victory and Smit was narrowly beaten by Jiri Privratsky, while Maciej Kowalewicz of Poland finished 22 points back on 230.1 to take the bronze medal.

NEWS IN BRIEF

£63,000 RAISED FOR RAF BENEVOLENT FUND OVER A 10-YEAR PERIOD OF SUPPORT

The RAF Small Arms Association and the City of London Livery Companies have raised over £63,000 for the RAF Benevolent Fund over 10 years of support.

Every year, the RAF Small Arms Association and representatives from the livery companies host the Inter-Livery Target Rifle Shoot at Bisley Camp Surrey, the home of British rifle shooting.

This year's event saw 48 liverymen from 16 City of the London livery companies take part in the competition, with over £7,000 raised for the fund.

The event involved six disciplines including target rifle, sniper rifle, moving target, black power pistol, gallery rifle and bell target.

This year, the Tallow Chandlers team won overall and was awarded the Bakers Cup, donated by the Worshipful Company of Bakers.

Colin Sach, organiser and master of a City Livery Company, said: "Over the past 10 years, the event has grown and now occupies a regular slot in the Livery and Bisley calendar, and is well supported by the City Livery Companies."

"We are delighted to support the RAF Benevolent Fund's ongoing commitment to supporting serving and ex-serving personnel and their families."

For more information on the work of the RAF Benevolent Fund, visit rafbf.org

CALENDAR

14 - 16 FEB 25
The British Shooting Show,
NEC, Birmingham
shootingshow.co.uk

20 - 23 FEB 25
The British Open Air Gun Championships
nsra.co.uk

1 & 2 MAR 25
Welsh Smallbore Rifle Association Indoor Open Competition
wsra22@yahoo.com

15 & 16 MAR 25
The Scottish Air Pistol & Rifle Championships 2025
scottishtargetshooting.co.uk

23 MAR 25
.22 Benchrest Masters
fdpc.org.uk

10 & 11 MAY 25
The Northern Shooting Show
Yorkshire Event Centre, Harrogate
nationalshootingshow.co.uk

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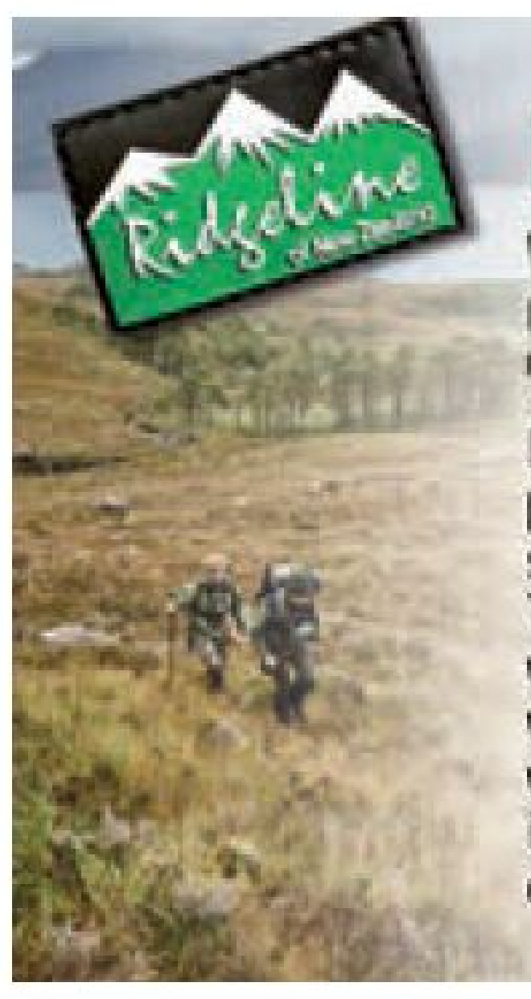

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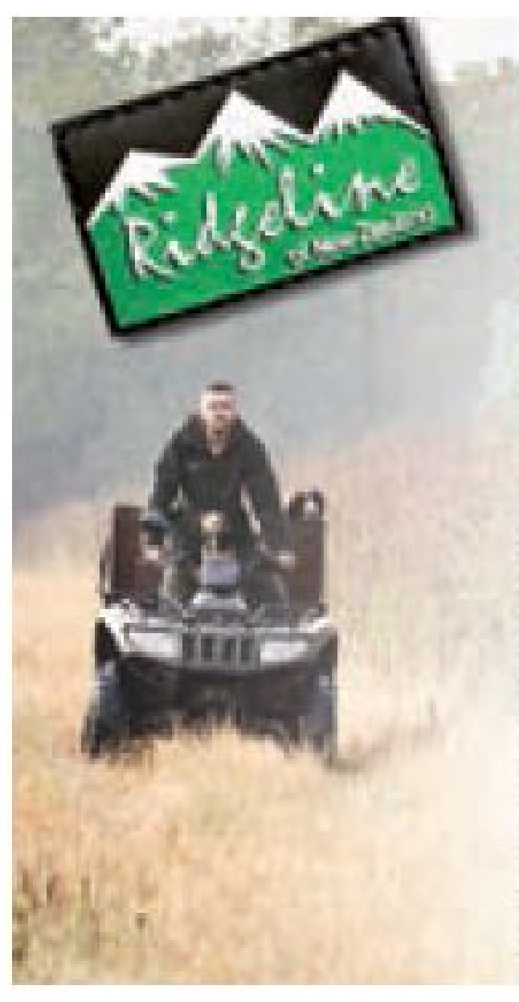

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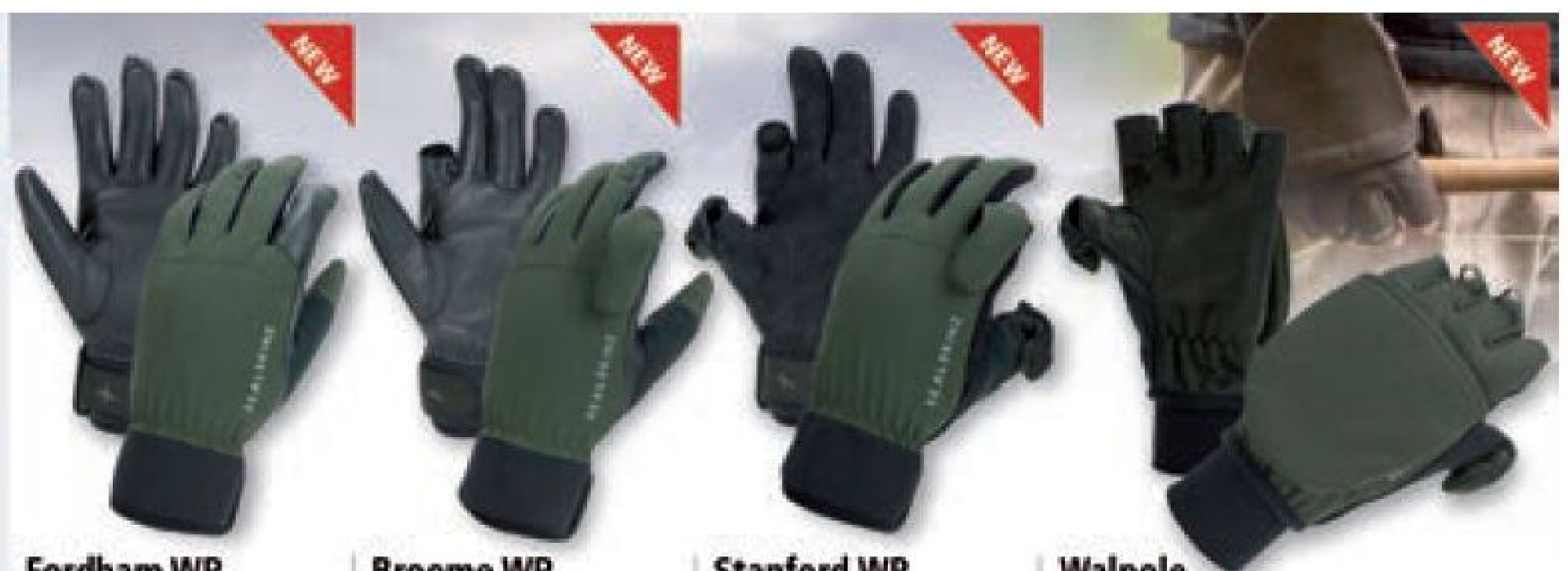

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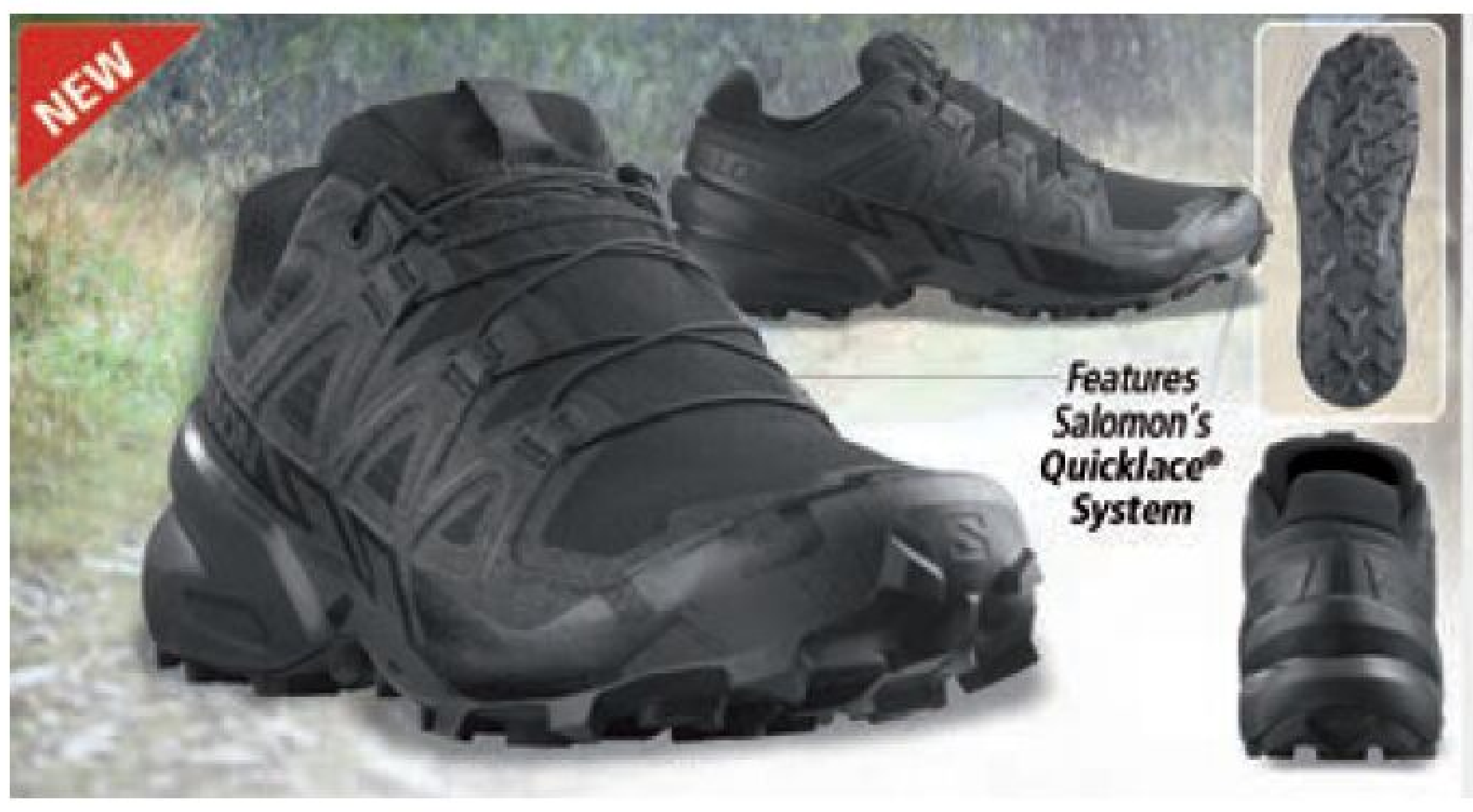

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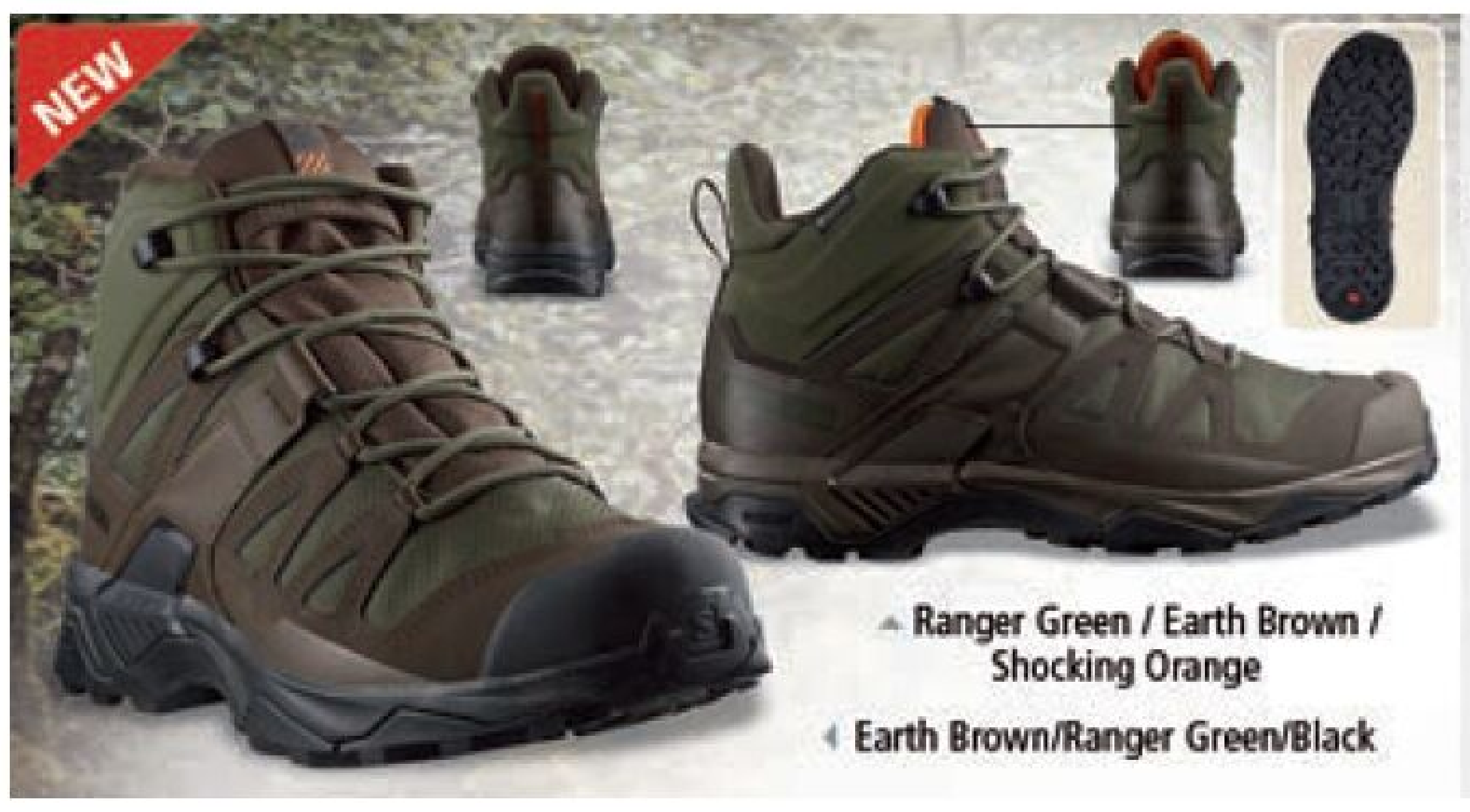
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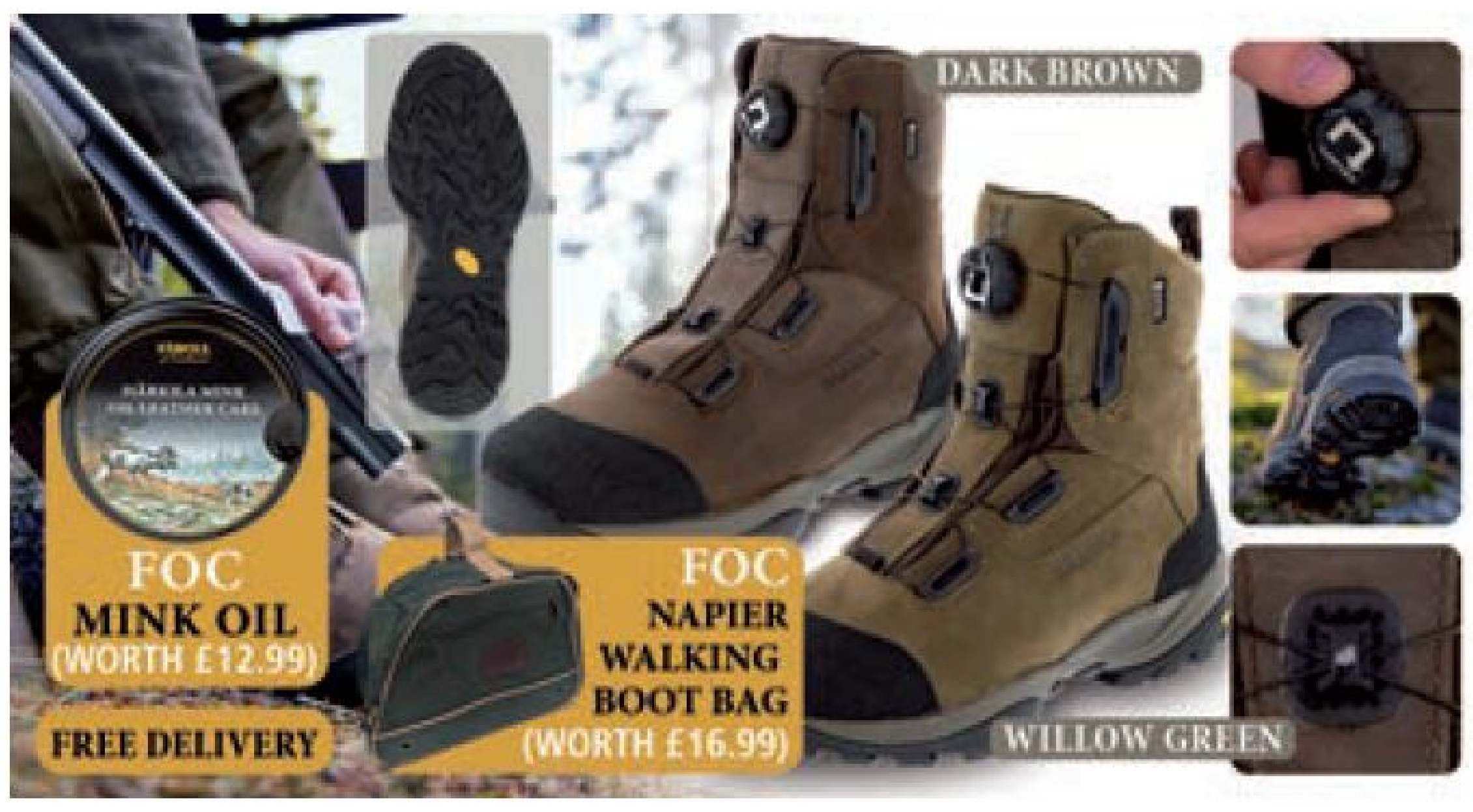

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Tailored for target shooting, offering high magnification and precise adjustments to help shooters achieve their accuracy goals. Whether you're engaging targets at short or long distances, this scope provides the versatility and clarity needed for precision shooting. Its ultra-short design ensures compatibility with a wide range of firearms, making it ideal for shooters who prioritize maneuverability and ease of handling.

Armoury 6-24x44 IR SFP SF (30mm)
Ultra Compact Riflescope - Includes Mounts - RRP £279 **NOW ONLY £179**

HAWKE

AIRMAX WA 30 SF

FOR SERIOUS AIRGUN SHOOTERS

- 16 layer fully multi-coated optics for exceptional clarity
- Side focus control for parallax adjustment to infinity
- 30mm mono-tube chassis
- Glass etched reticle with red illumination
- Stepped red illumination
- ¹⁄₁₀ MRAD capped target turrets
- Fast focus eyebell & high torque zoom ring

	RRP	NOW
10x44 SF	£379	£349
4-16x50 SF	£389	£359
6-24x50 SF	£409	£379
8-32x50 SF	£429	£399

		RRP	WAS	NOW
SPECIAL OFFER	4-16X50 SF - FFP	£429	~~£379~~	£299
SPECIAL OFFER	6-24X50 SF - FFP	£449	~~£399~~	£309

FALCON OPTICAL SYSTEMS

ENDURA S10i

NEW

P22i Reticle

The Endura S10i is a LPVO/Precision crossover scope with a choice of close range (25m parallax) or standard (100m parallax) configurations. Features wide angle optical system with wide and flat field of view, even at low magnification.

- 1-10x Magnification range Robust 30mm tube design of single piece construction
- Fully multi coated lenses (Low Dispersion)
- P22i Illuminated Red Dot Reticle with MRAD based stadia and 0.2MRAD holds
- Daytime Bright

	RRP	NOW
1-10x24 SFP - P22i Reticle - 25mm Parallax	£329	£299
1-10x24 SFP - P22i Reticle - 100mm Parallax	£329	£299

FALCON OPTICAL SYSTEMS

T50i

5-50x60i

NEW

Reticle E-CDi
(Enhanced Competition Dot)

125mm Ranging Wheel
£69

Brand new ED lens system and 10x zoom ratio. A newly updated glass etched reticle design with a floating competition dot. Built around a 34mm main-tube with locking windage and elevation turrets.

- Wide Angle Optical System using ED Lenses
- 10x Zoom Ratio of 5-50 Power
- 34mm Tube Diameter
- Elevation Travel Range of +70 MOA
- Side Parallax from 10M > Infinity
- Thow Lever & Sunshade Included
- Push/Pull Locking Windage & Elevation Turrets
- Enhanced Competition Dot Reticle (Illuminated)
- Nitrogen Purged, waterproof, fogproof, shockproof

	RRP	NOW
5-50x60i ED - E-CDi	£469	£399

HIKMICRO

See the World in a New Way

NEW for 2024

ALPEX

Day & Night Riflescope

The same 30mm tube chassis as the Stellar thermal scope but with HIK's advanced night vision technology.

ALPEX 4K

Day & Night Riflescope with LRF

Built on an all-new robust 30mm tube chassis for conventional ring-mounting, the new Alpex 4K LRF takes a winning formula and boosts specification and performance in every area - a new benchmark for 2024.

REDUCED!

- Built-in Wi-Fi module
- Built-in video recorder
- Picture in picture
- Colour nightvision
- Switching surveillance modes
- Dustproof & waterproof

	RRP	NOW
Alpex	£599.99	£399
Alpex + IR 850nm Illuminator	£699.99	£499

- 4k UHD sensor for extreme clarity in daylight, twilight, starlight and full darkness
- Onboard laser range finder with ballistic calculator
- Improved and enlarged screen
- Updated control wheel design
- Adjustable aperture

	RRP	NOW
Alpex 4K LRF A50EL NEW	£899.99	£849
Alpex 4K A50E NEW	£749.99	£699

ATN MARS LTV+

THERMAL RIFLE SCOPES

The latest innovation in thermal imaging, designed for hunters and shooting enthusiasts who demand superior performance and convenience. Featuring a crisp new OLED display, intuitive user interface, and built-in video recording, it ensures every shot and memory is captured with clarity. The Stadiametric Rangefinder offers precise distance measurements, while its ergonomic, lightweight design makes it perfect for long hunts.

MARS LTV+ 256x192

1.5-4.5x	£849
2-6x	£939
3-9x	£1099
4-12x	£1249

MARS LTV+ 320x240

3-9x	£1249
4-12x	£1349
5-15x	£1449

MARS LTV+ 640x480

2-6x	£1949
3-9x	£2129
4-12x	£2199

Nocpix

THERMAL IMAGING

LUMI

Portable handheld thermal monocular

The LUMI Series makes a powerful first impression with its compact, mini body and superior capabilities. With in-house developed sensor technology and advanced Reality+ AI image algorithms, it delivers exceptional image quality that stands out in its class.

			Range	
LUMI P13	256x192px	12μm	670m	£539
LUMI L19	384x288px	12μm	980m	£899
LUMI L35	384x288px	12μm	1800m	£1269
LUMI H35	640x512px	12μm	1800m	£1699

- Silent Button
- 10mm Exit Pupil
- 7 colour palletes
- F0.9 Large Aperture
- Photo/Video/MIC/32GB
- Replaceable 18650 Battery
- Lightweight and Pocket Sized
- Reality+ Image Improvement Algorithms

Nocpix

THERMAL IMAGING

VISTA

High-end thermal imaging monocular

Vista's Vision+ System, with its 1.03inch, 2560.2560 round AMOLED display and 8mm exit pupil diameter, offers an immersive observational experience. Equipped with a superior sensor and integrated LRF, Vista delivers top-tier performance in the industry.

			Range	LRF Range	
VISTA H35	640x512px	12μm	1800m	-	£1899
VISTA H35R	640x512px	12μm	1800m	1200m	£2199
VISTA H50	640x512px	12μm	2600m	-	£2399
VISTA H50R	640x512px	12μm	2600m	1200m	£2599

- Silent Buttons
- 8mm Exit Pupil
- 7 colour palletes
- Image Stabilization
- F0.9 Large Aperture
- Photo/Video/MIC/64GB
- Integrated LRF (R Models)
- Replaceable IBP-7 Battery
- Vision+ and Reality+ Image Improvement Algorithms

Bushnell

BINOCULARS

R3

NEW

Exceptional clarity and rugged durability for all outdoor adventures. Fully multi-coated optics for reliable, light transmission and clear views from dawn to dusk.

		RRP	NOW
8x42	Green	£116	£99.99
10x42	Green	£122	£109.99

Bushnell

BINOCULARS

R5

NEW

The R5 Binoculars from Bushnell are designed to offer enhanced clarity and sharp views in low-light conditions with fully multi-coated optics and advanced prism coatings.

		RRP	NOW
8x42	Ranger Green	£254	£229.99
10x42	Ranger Green	£268	£249.99
12x50	Ranger Green	£304	£279.99

Bushnell

BINOCULARS

R3 1200 (6x25)

NEW

Includes case
R3

Accurate up to 1200 yards, making it ideal for both archery and rifle applications with a 1-yard accuracy throughout the entire range.
Range Green
RRP £244 **£229.99**

Bushnell

BINOCULARS

R5 2000 AB

NEW

Includes case
R5

Accurate up to 2000 yards, features Bluetooth connectivity with built-in Applied Ballistics Ultralite for a ballistic solution out to 800 yards.
Range Green
RRP £304 **£279.99**

AirForceOne

MUZZLE-MOUNT CHRONOGRAPH

NEW

MUZZLE-MOUNT CHRONO
547.2 fps
PROJECTILE
EXIT

SCREW TO MUZZLE
1/2" UNF THREAD
PROJECTILE
EXIT

- Screws directly onto any ½" UNF threaded gun muzzle-avoids mis-aligned shots
- Measures: Grams, Grains, FPS,MPS, Ft/lbs, Joules
- Instant on screen results
- iOS/Android apps for seamless data transfer
- USB-C charging-Charging cable included
- Works indoors and out
- No additional light required
- Supplied in padded carry-case

£139.99

FX airguns

Ballistic Radar Chronograph

NEW

TRUE BALLISTIC
3162 3330

The chronograph that just works!

Measures actual speeds at four different velocities readings from 0 - 300yrds to determine actual ballistic coefficient using G1/G7 drag models. This provides actual data in your conditions, info that provides the difference between a hit and a miss. Whats it worth to you to hit your target? Use the on board display or connect to the FX Radar app to get more out of the ballistic data.

£899.99

SPARTAN PRECISION EQUIPMENT

JAVELIN LITE BIPOD

ULTRA LIGHTWEIGHT AND COMPACT!

Based upon the original & highly successful Spartan 'Javelin' bipod. Designed to be carried in a pocket or pouch, off of the rifle until required. The 'Javelin Lite' uses precision CNC machining and high quality edge carbon fibre materials to produce an innovative, modular & highly effective shooting support for the modern shooter.

Standard Leg Length
Approx 14cm
£129

JAVELIN LITE ACCESSORIES

Javelin Lite Standard Leg - Singles........**£27.99**

Bipod Adaptors	Davros Head
from **£24.99**	from **£64.99**

SPARTAN PRECISION EQUIPMENT

JAVELIN PRO HUNT TAC

ULTRA LIGHTWEIGHT AND COMPACT!

Long
Standard

Designed for hunters who cover large areas, often in mountainous and wooded terrain, the Javelin Pro Hunt Tac is carried in a pocket, holster or pack and can be deployed in seconds thanks to the Spartan Magnetic Attachment System.

Standard Leg Length
Approx 14cm - **£289**
Long Leg Length
Approx 14cm - **£289**

PRO HUNT ACCESSORIES

Pro Hunt TAC Legs
(singles)

Standard Leg	£64.99
Long Leg	£64.99

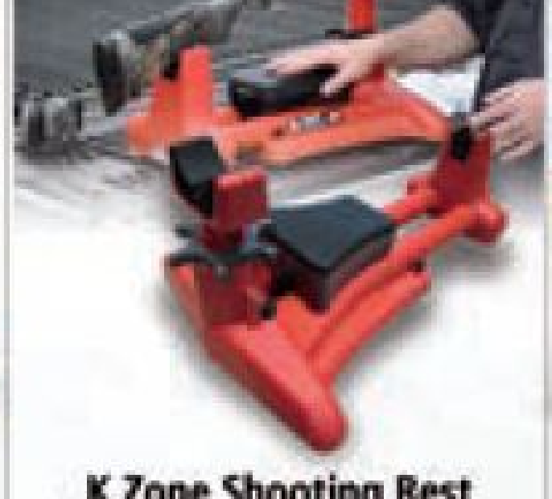
Bipod Adaptors	Davros Head
from **£24.99**	from **£64.99**

MTM CASE-GARD

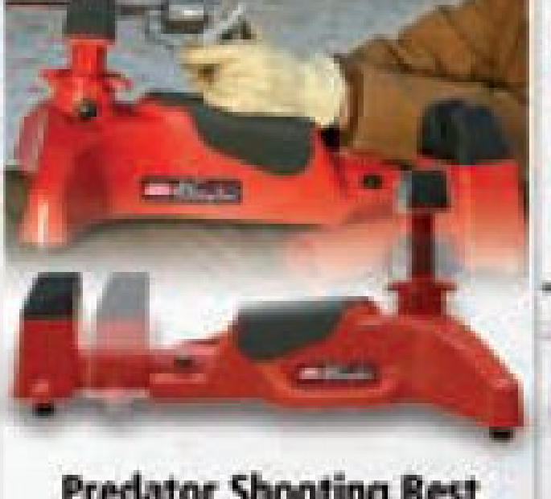
RIFLE AND SHOOTING RESTS

Quick Rest
lightweight, simple designed front rifle rest. Ideal for checking your rifle at hunting camp or at the range.
£12.99

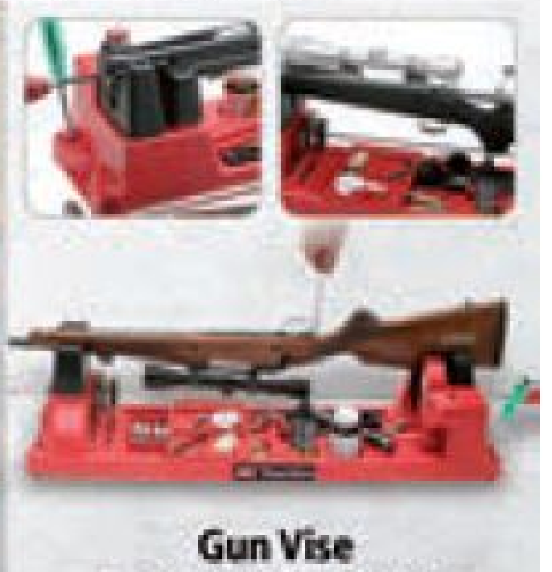
Front Rifle Rest
Three legged rest that can be used with nearly any shape gun stock but handgun enthusiasts will find it just as accurate.
£39.99



K Zone Shooting Rest
The tool you need for better accuracy. Designed for precision sighting in of rifles and for testing ammo and reloads.
£69.99



Predator Shooting Rest
Exclusive "Positive Four-Point Contact System" gives a stable, rock-solid platform that shooters demand of expensive metal rests.
£69.99



Gun Vise
Features a fast, single adjustment clamp down and a secure non-marring hold.
£69.99

BIRCHWOOD CASEY

SHOOTING RESTS

Tango Shooting Rest
Padded front rest
£49.99

Foxtrot Shooting Rest
Padded front and rear............**£79.99**

Echo Shooting Rest
Steel frame design..................**£79.99**

Bravo Shooting Rest
Rigid steel frame..................**£189.99**

Alpha Shooting Rest
Rigid steel frame...............**£349.99**

E+OE Prices subject to change. Goods subject to availability

AIRMAIL

SUBMIT YOUR LETTERS

To share your views with the readership,
email: **airgunworld@twsgroup.com**

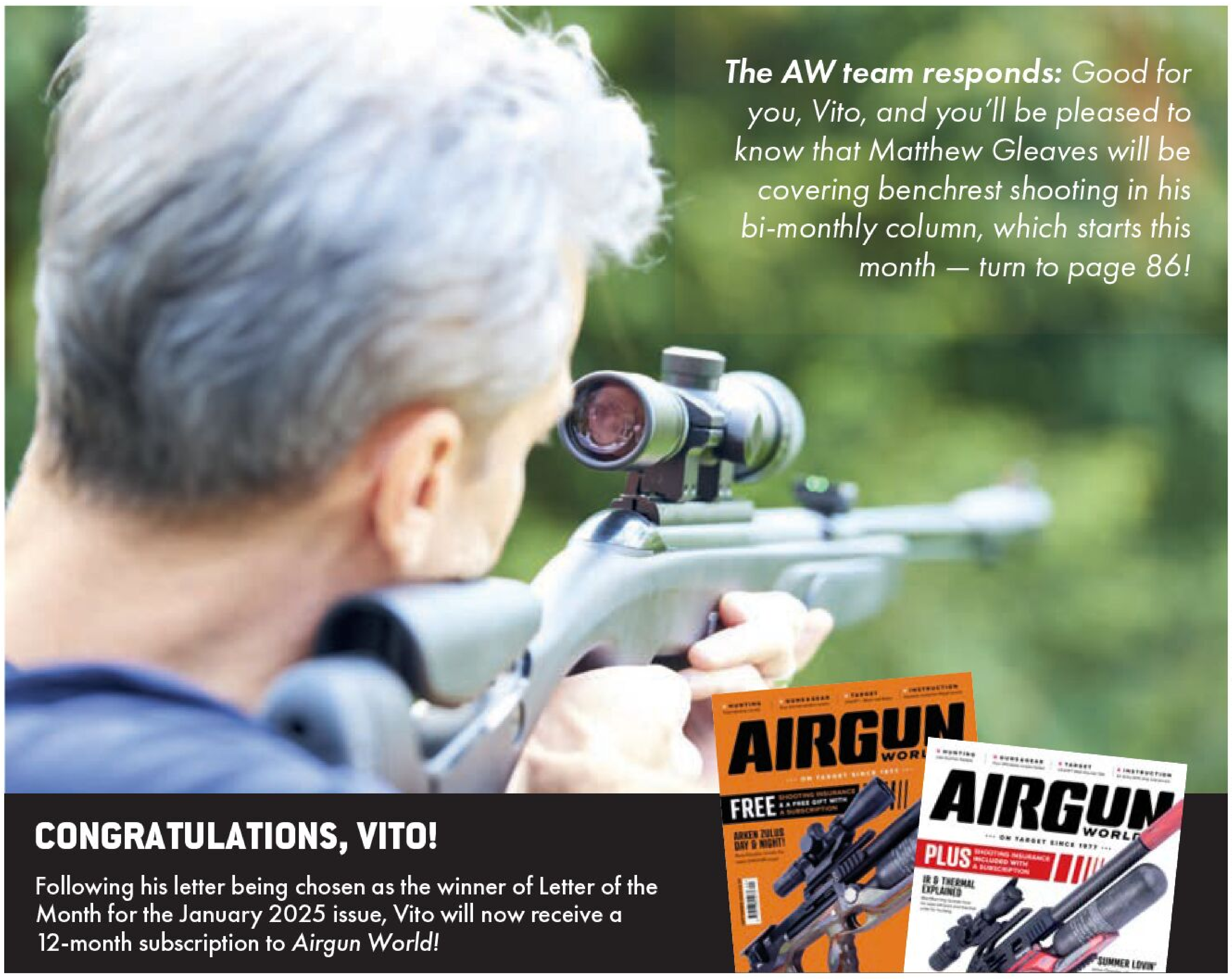
LETTER OF THE MONTH

NEVER BE AFRAID TO TRY SOMETHING NEW

I come from a bell target shooting background. I'm 74 now and am still as keen as ever. In the early days of FT, myself and two friends (Ron Smallwood and Brian Travis) started attending competitions just to try something different. We used to arrive wearing our canvas and leather shooting jackets and gloves. Other shooters dressed mainly in camouflage and looked at us as if we were from another planet. I see that now shooting jackets and so on are now the norm.

I would appreciate more articles on bell target shooting. I intend to try 25 metre benchrest with my modified Walther LG400, which is adjustable from 6ft/lb to 12ft/lb, in the coming months. I'm just getting my head around the rules (I hate too many rules) and where to shoot competitions in and around my native Shropshire.

Vito Pacini



The AW team responds: *Good for you, Vito, and you'll be pleased to know that Matthew Gleaves will be covering benchrest shooting in his bi-monthly column, which starts this month — turn to page 86!*

CONGRATULATIONS, VITO!

Following his letter being chosen as the winner of Letter of the Month for the January 2025 issue, Vito will now receive a 12-month subscription to *Airgun World!*

PHOTOGRAPH: COPYRIGHT (C) 2017 KINGA/SHUTTERSTOCK.

HIGH PRAISE FOR BRATTONSOUND

Just recently I found myself with only one key for my Brattonsound cabinet, a precarious situation most would agree with.

However, a single telephone call to Brattonsound had a replacement blank key in the post. Thereafter, our local key cutting service cut the double-sided key while I waited.

I highly recommend Brattonsound, firstly for a high-quality product and most of all exceptional after-sales service.

Ralph Coulson

HELP REQUIRED ON MOULDY FEED

I am a long-time air rifle shooter who has recently been given access to a fair sized piece of woodland for the purposes of grey squirrel shooting.

Having built and sited the first of three planned feeders and cameras, I have discovered after two weeks that the feed is beginning to grow mouldy. There have only been a couple of inquisitive squirrels nosing around so far.

Is mould a known issue, or am I missing something important? I haven't coated the feeder in anything other than wire mesh. Any help is appreciated.

David Frost

LOTHAR WALTHER

www.lothar-walther.de

Gun barrel and more

100 years of quality

.510-AIR

AIRGUNS CALIBER .177(4,5MM) .20(5,0MM) .22(5,50MM) .25(6,35MM) .30(7,62MM) .357(9MM) .457

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BRK
BROCOCK

FOR THE RANGE
FOR THE FIELD

WE HAVE A RIFLE FOR YOUR EVERY NEED

SCAN ME!

GHOST

Ghost HP Blaze Edition with optional MTC King Cobra 8-32x50 F1 scope and 0dB Silencer

Pathfinder XR Carbine with optional MTC Copperhead 4-16x44 F2 scope and eye-cup

SCAN ME!

XR

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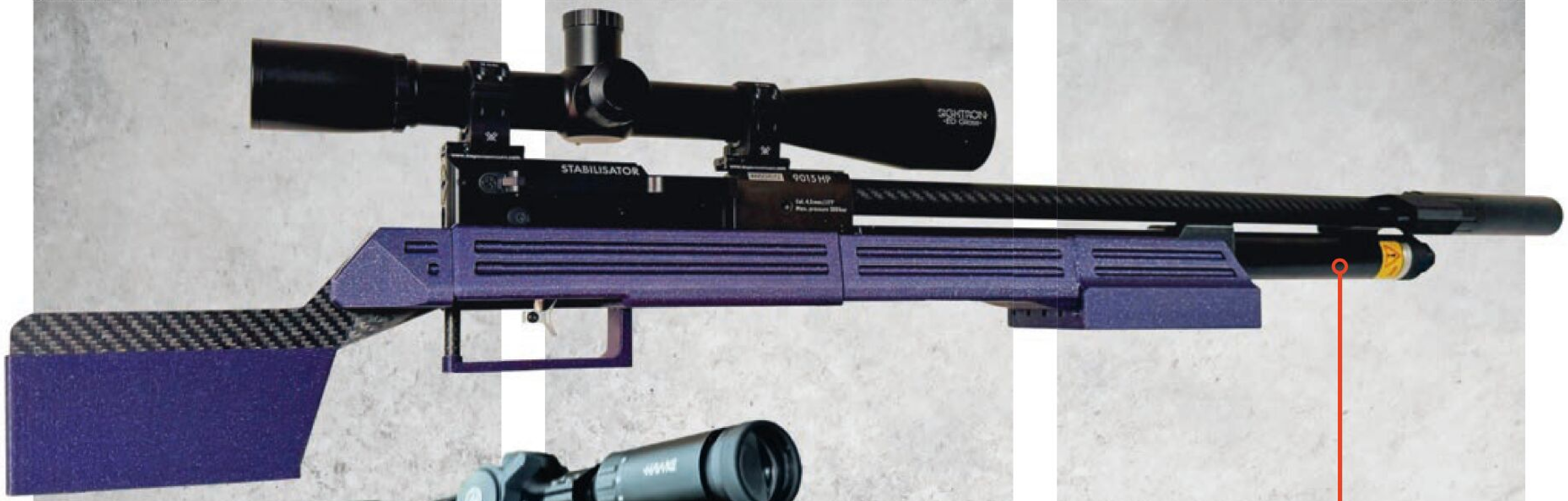
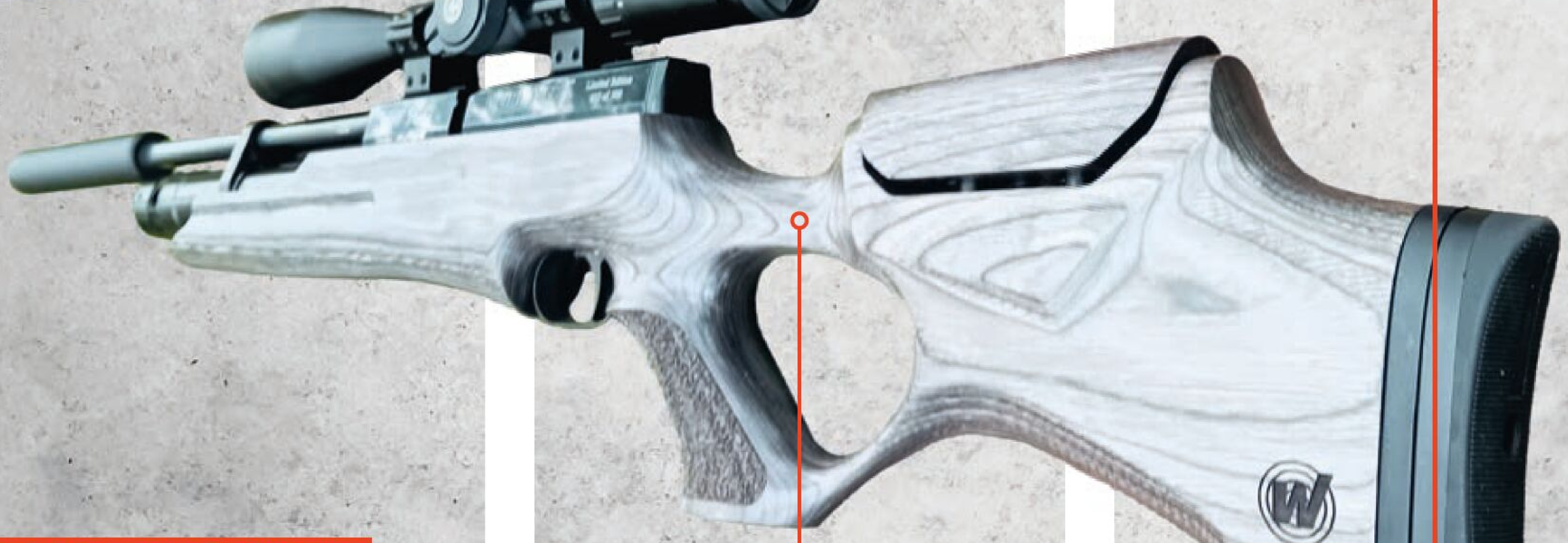
READERS' RIFLES

SHARE FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A SUB

We want to see *your* airgun! Do you have a treasured air rifle that you are super proud of? Do you spend all your free time tinkering with it? If so, share it with *AW*! Email us the make and model, what you've customised, and what success you've had so far. Our favourite entry will win a 12-month subscription to *Airgun World*. Send to: airgunworld@twsgroup.com





RIFLE OF THE MONTH

GARY DAUBNEY

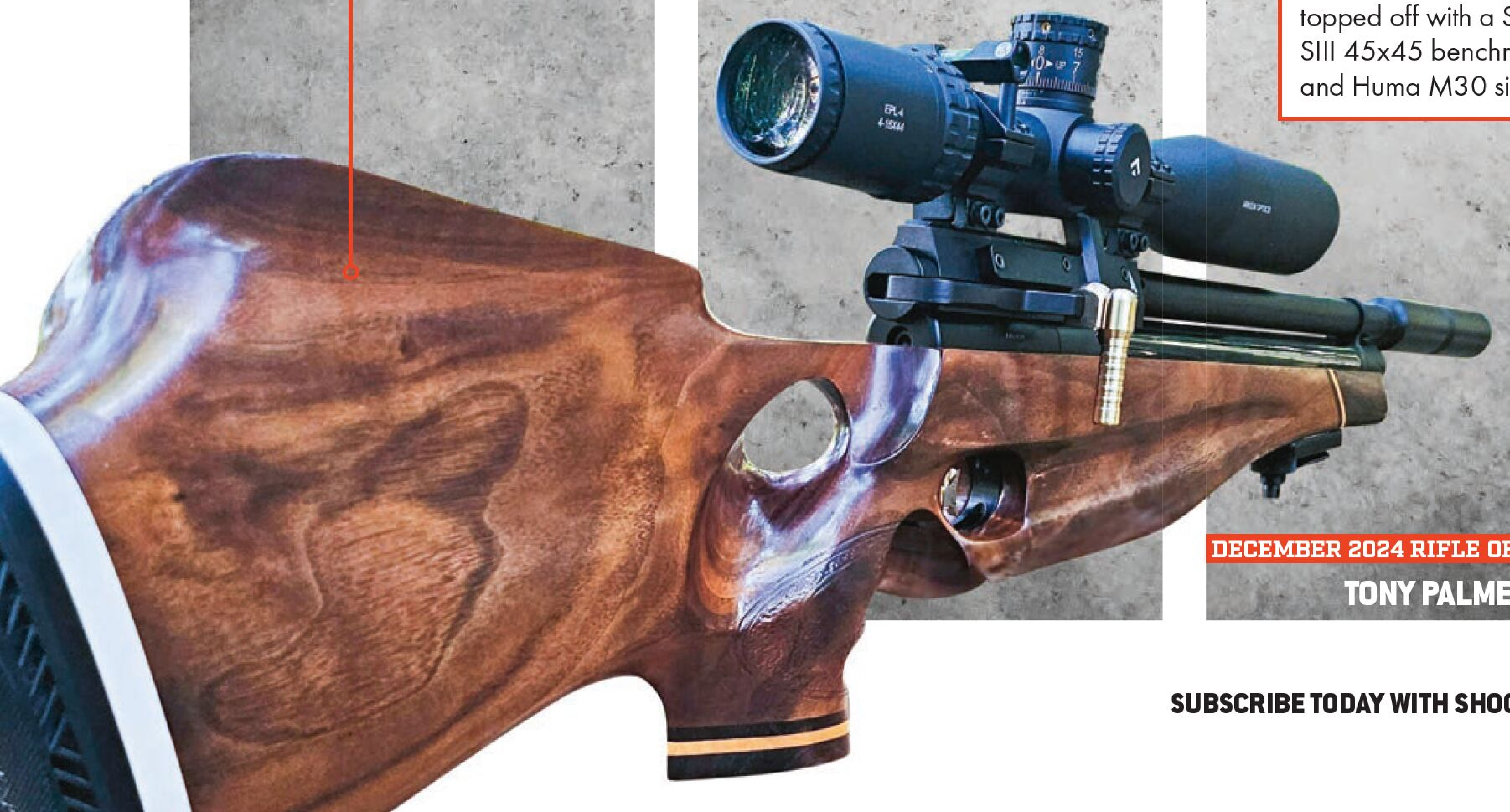
I managed to get this stock from a fellow shooter at the range some four years back. I put an S400 .22 in it, followed by a .177 S400, before recently upgrading to an S510. It fits me perfectly and, in my honest opinion, looks great, too.

NIGEL LEA

I recently shot at Blackbrook Country Sports with my two Weihrauch 100s, including a limited edition .177 KT with grey laminate stocking (pictured). The rifle has been to Rat Works and had a Huggett shroud and moderator fitted, along with an LP custom stock. Both rifles are fitted with Hawke Vantage side focus 4x16x44 scopes.

KEVIN JOHNSTON

Kevin sent this to Matthew Gleaves and Matthew describes it as follows: "with its 3D printed stock, this is a masterpiece of design and functionality. The stock is built around the very popular and event-winning Anschutz 9015HP action. The rifle is topped off with a Sightron SIII 45x45 benchrest scope and Huma M30 silencer".



DECEMBER 2024 RIFLE OF THE MONTH

TONY PALMER

SWARM
BY GAMO
Precision Airguns
10X
QUICK-SHOT
DOMINATE THE AIR
VARMINT SWARM TACTICAL
VARMINT SWARM
VARMINT SWARM BARRACADE
WHISPER X SWARM
MAXXIM ELITE SWARM
MAXXIM ELITE SWARM TACTICAL
CAMO ROCKET SWARM
*All Swarm rifles available in .177 & .22 calibre
ALL NEW SWARM SERIES
THE WORLD'S ONLY 10-SHOT BREAK BARREL AIR RIFLE RANGE
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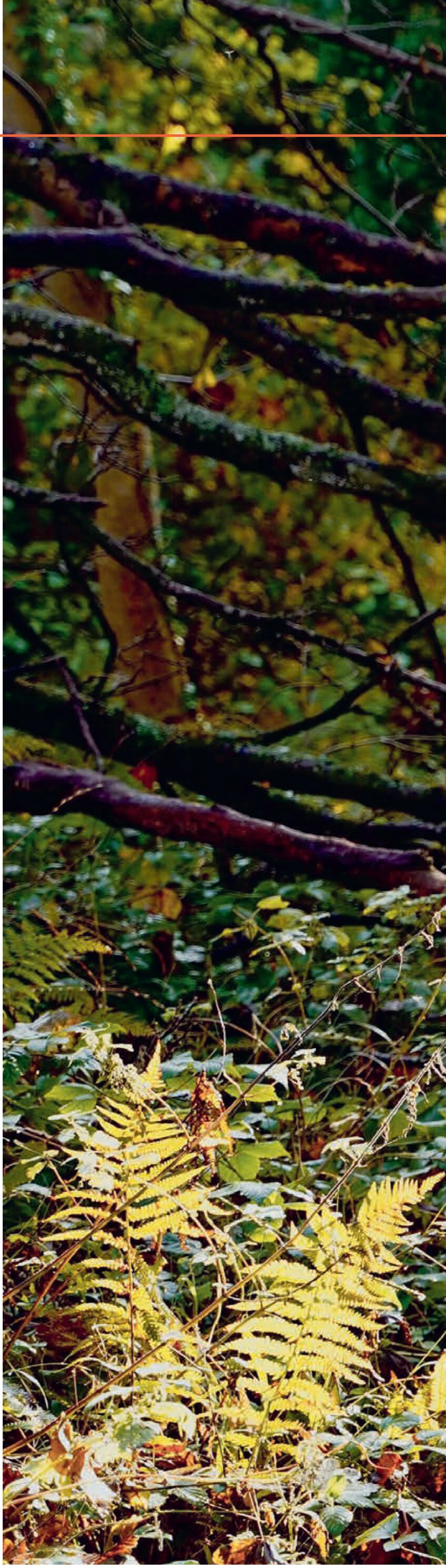
THE WELSH WIZARD

Our guest editor Gareth Wyn Jones shares the joys of his airgun shooting journey, from target shooting and rabbit control during his boyhood to becoming slightly obsessed with one particular air rifle as an adult

PHOTOGRAPHY **MARI JONES**



Gareth has been shooting with airguns since the age of 10, learning the basics from a local pest controller called Maldwin

Outspoken Welsh farmer and best-selling author Gareth Wyn Jones needs little introduction. Often described by the media as "a one-man whirlwind", he is a straight-talking disruptor and tireless advocate for the farming community that will not be silenced. His social media following now includes 2.5m on YouTube, 135,000 on TikTok, 355,000 on Facebook and 70,000 on X. We caught up with the vociferous media personality about reconnecting with airguns in his 50s and how they play such a vital role in his life.

So who is Gareth Wyn Jones?

I live amidst the breathtaking Carneddau mountains in North Wales. I farm in partnership with my family; we run 4,000 sheep and 300 cows on 2,000 acres of pasture and 27,000 acres of open mountain. I was born and raised at Ty'n Llwyfan, my family's farm, with a lineage spanning 350 years. Now aged 57, I live here with my wife of 24 years Rhian and we have three grown-up children, Sior, Rolant and Mari.

How did you come to be so well known?

It all began in 2012 when I was recruited to appear on S4C's documentary about Snowdonia National Park. To my surprise, I found I really enjoyed appearing on TV. I then took part in another S4C programme called *The Fferm Ffactor*, where 10 of us competed head-to-head in a series of farming challenges — I came fourth and it was the most incredible experience. Then came the devastating snowstorm of spring 2013. The vlogs we posted on social media propelled us into the limelight. We were trying to rescue the area's rare-breed Carneddau ponies as well as our own sheep. We buried 76 ponies…it was a harrowing experience. It was then that I realised how powerful the media is; there was such a huge response. Something lit inside me. I thought, this is a way I can tell our story and get our ideas out there. Two primetime television series followed, BBC's *The Hill Farm* and *The Family Farm*, which I co-presented with Kate Humble. These shows documented the trials and triumphs experienced by my family farm over the course of a year, allowing viewers to witness first-hand the complexities of farming life. I also took part in Channel 4's show *Come Dine With Me*, where I made headlines globally with a risqué joke about a dessert containing bull semen (it didn't).

How did you first get involved in airgun shooting?

I got my first airgun when I was about 10 years old. It was nothing special — an entry level break-barrel BSA with no scope. My brother had a Weihrauch. Both were handed down to us by our cousin. At first we just shot targets. We never paid for targets — we simply used old tins, bits of paper or pumpkins. Anyone in a role of authority had their face drawn on the pumpkin!

My father was very strict about safety and taught us about how to cross fences and not to ever point them at people. A local pest controller called Maldwin, who we nicknamed "Maldi Fox", also spent a lot of time with us teaching us how to correctly handle the airguns. He is now aged 80 and still visits the farm to help out. We progressed onto shooting rabbits. The airguns did not have a very long range so we had to hone our fieldcraft to get close enough. We then started shooting rats around the yard. The farm was a perfect training ground for us.

> **"I also find airgun shooting very relaxing. There is something about sitting out at dusk patiently waiting for the quarry to show itself. I like the quiet and being alone with my thoughts"**

Gareth confesses to being obsessed with his .22 Webley & Scott Eagle PCP

Gareth finds airguns invaluable for controlling pests in and around his farm

Gareth is now rarley without his Webley & Scott Eagle PCP .22 during his farmland wanderings

What airgun do you shoot with today?

A Webley & Scott Eagle PCP in .22. I have had it for five months and I am obsessed with it. I feel like I am having a midlife crisis. I'd had a break from airguns and hadn't really used them as I relied on Maldi and my mate Richard Griffiths to do the pest control. I used to use poison to control rats but I was becoming disenchanted with it. My views on its use have changed and I now use no poison on the farm at all and only control pests by shooting. I have an elderly terrier and I was worried he'd pick up something. Airguns are a godsend for livestock farmers. I can shoot rabbits in the sheep field without spooking any of the ewes, and I can pick off rats in the cow shed without worrying pregnant heifers. Airguns are so stealthy. I am now never without my airgun by my side. I shoot squirrels that are stealing corn from the chickens, magpies that are pinching eggs, rabbits that are overgrazing grass and rats setting up camp in the straw bales. I don't mind seeing these species around but it is very obvious when there is an overpopulation and things are out of balance. When I was a kid there were red squirrels on this farm. Not anymore. So I am now on a mission to help bring them back before I depart the planet.

What do you like about airgun shooting?

It is totally accessible for the whole family. Since taking delivery of the Webley, my kids have been enjoying using it, too. Last summer, we would often spend afternoons in the yard shooting targets together. It is an insane amount of fun. However, I often find the kids have taken the airgun when I need it, so I think we will have to buy a second.

I am sad that I did not think to get an airgun before now. Another reason to love airgun shooting is the fact that modern airguns are super accurate and powerful and the pellets do not spoil the meat. Apart from the rats and corvids, we eat everything that we shoot. We love a squirrel burger in our house.

I also find airgun shooting very relaxing. There is something about sitting out at dusk patiently waiting for the quarry to show itself. I like the quiet and being alone with my thoughts. It is almost meditative. I am normally surrounded by noise: wrangling livestock, working dogs — farming is non-stop. So, to sit out with a Thermos, airgun and ATN night vision is bliss. Unlike game shooting, there is no peer pressure with airgun shooting. I like that it is a solo pastime.

What other gear do you swear by when out airgun shooting?

I am a big fan of Ridgeline clothing and Gateway1 boots.

What advice do you have for someone wanting to start hunting with an airgun?

Once you are safe and competent, the next step is to gain permission on some land. The one thing farmers are all short of is time. None of them want an overabundance of pests on their land so do knock on their door and ask if you can help. Make sure you have every possible documentation in place before you do so — I would recommend taking BASC's free air rifle safe shot theory test as well as producing an insurance certificate. Richard Griffiths has been shooting rats and squirrels on my farm since he was 15 years old. His father used to do the pest control for my father. I guess you could say we have been lifelong friends because of airguns. Trust me, farmers need airgunners to help them keep their yards and barns pest free. Most will be grateful for your offer. ■

> ***“Airguns are a godsend for livestock farmers. I can shoot rabbits in the sheep field without spooking any of the ewes, and I can pick off rats in the cow shed without worrying pregnant heifers”***

AIRGUN TECHNOLOGY
MATCH PRO
VULCAN 3

EXTREME

LONG RANGE

If you want to shoot Extreme Long Range with an air rifle, you need an extreme air rifle to shoot with. Airgun Technology have the solution, with a range of rifles that will take you out to distances previously unimaginable from a PCP.

From ergonomically perfect stocks for close fit and ideal length of pull, a large plenum enabling increased muzzle velocity, and a 700mm barrel with a twist rate of 1:17.7 to stabilise the projectile, Airgun Technology air rifles are designed not just to push the boundaries, but to destroy them!

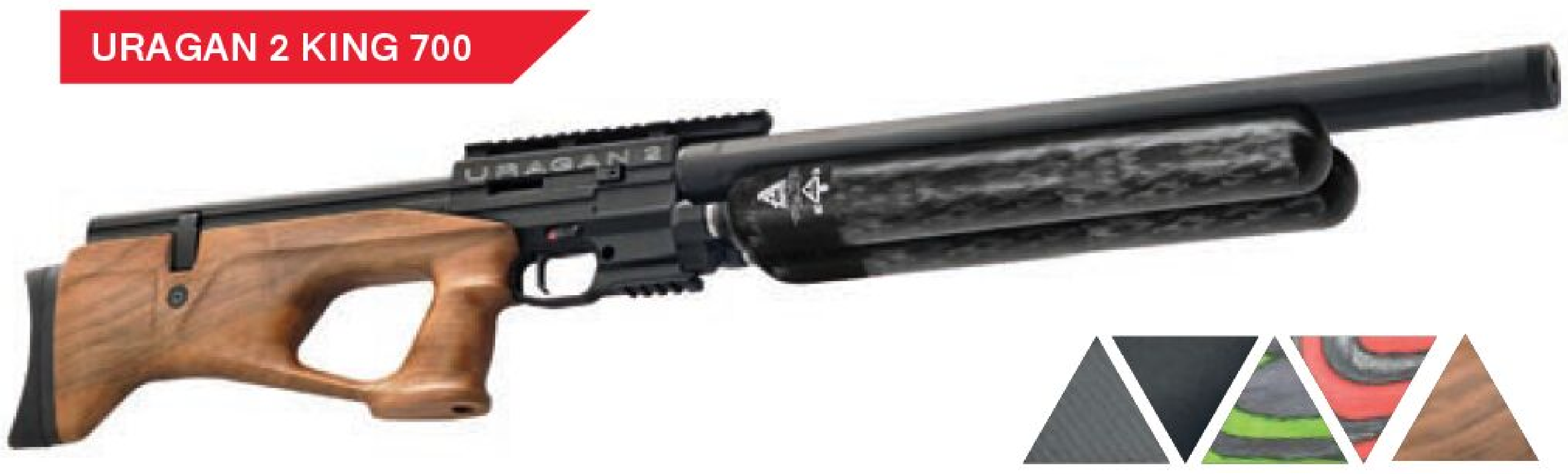
- **Cold hammer forged barrel**
- **Biathlon side lever is easily changed for right and left hand configuration, no special tools required**
- **Pressure gauge**
- **Pressure regulator**
- **Weaver rail**
- **Adjustable buttpad**
- **Safety catch**
- **Threaded for sound moderators**

Branded Manometer Air Pressure Guage

Biathlon Side Lever for left and right hand configuration

Removable Lower Weaver Rail (Uragan 2 & Vulcan 3)

URAGAN 2 KING 700

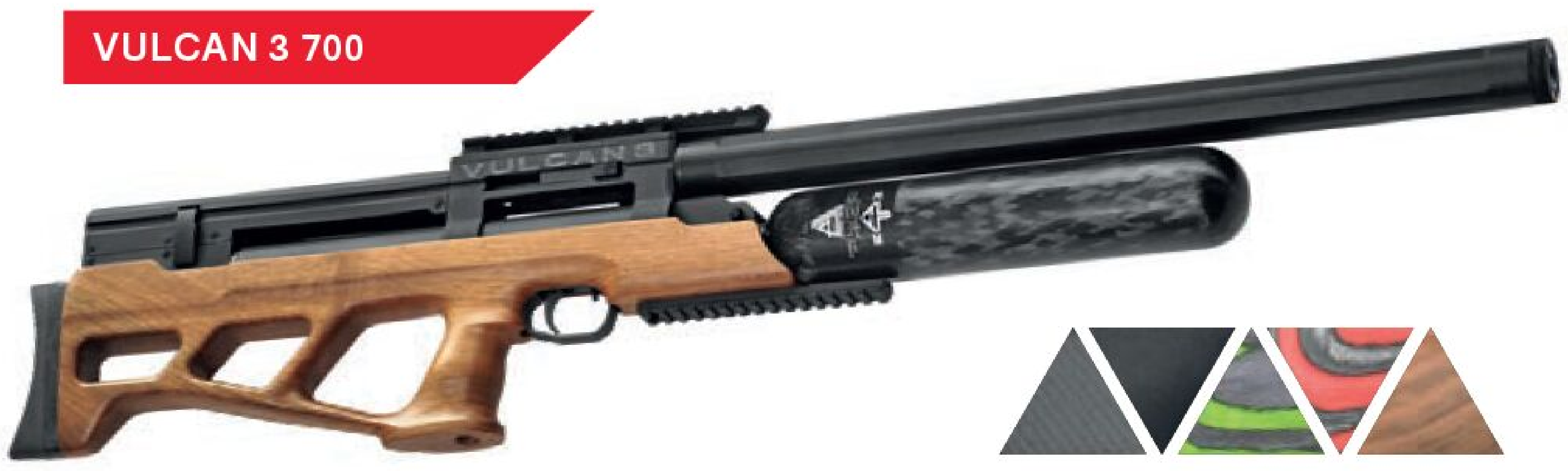


Calibre: .22, .25 & .30
Barrel: 700 mm

Length: 997mm
Weight: 4.1 kg

Air Tank Volume: 1060cm^3
Working Presure: 300 bar

VULCAN 3 700

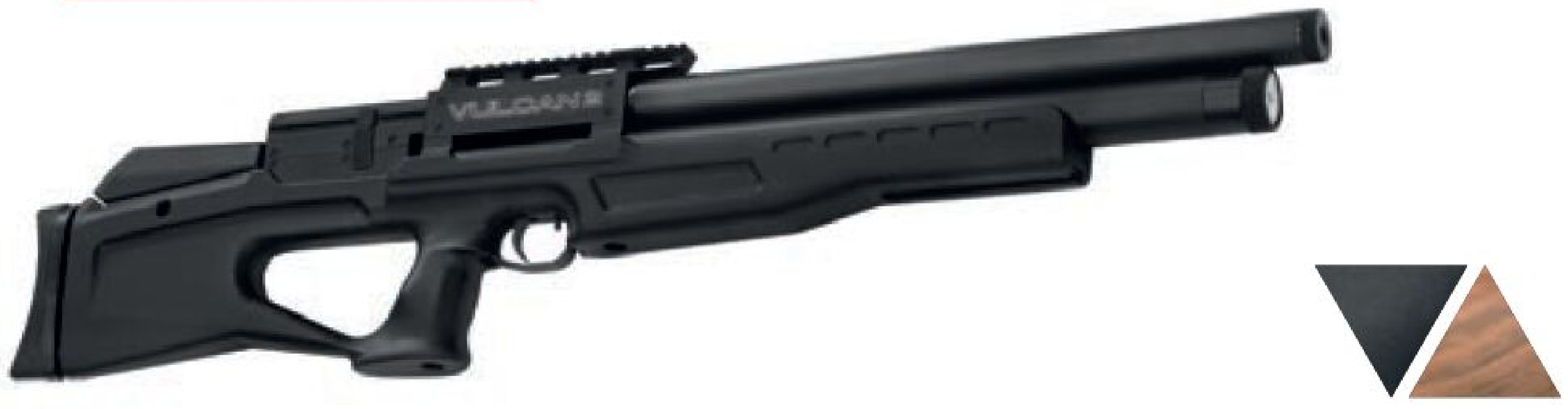


Calibre: .22, .25 & .30
Barrel: 700 mm

Length: 997mm
Weight: 3.8 kg

Air Tank Volume: 580cm^3
Working Presure: 300 bar

VULCAN 2 TACTICAL



Calibre: .177, .22, .25 & .30
Barrel: 500 mm

Length: 910mm
Weight: 3.7 kg

Air Tank Volume: 290cm^3
Working Presure: 250 bar

BRK PATH FINDER XR O.D GREEN

TECH SPEC

MODEL: Pathfinder XR OD Green

MANUFACTURER: BRK Brocock

TYPE: Pre-charged, multi-shot

CYLINDER CAPACITY: 300cc

MAX FILL PRESSURE: 200 bar

STOCK MATERIAL: Green synthetic

STOCK TYPE: Ambidextrous

COCKING: Sidelever

TRIGGER: Two-stage, adjustable

CALIBRES: .177 and .22 (.25 FAC)

SAFETY: Manual

OVERALL LENGTH: 416mm to 616mm (18.5in to 25.5in)

BARREL LENGTH: 256mm (10.1in)

MAGAZINE CAPACITY: 11 (.22) 13 (.177)

WEIGHT: 6.4lbs (2.9kg)

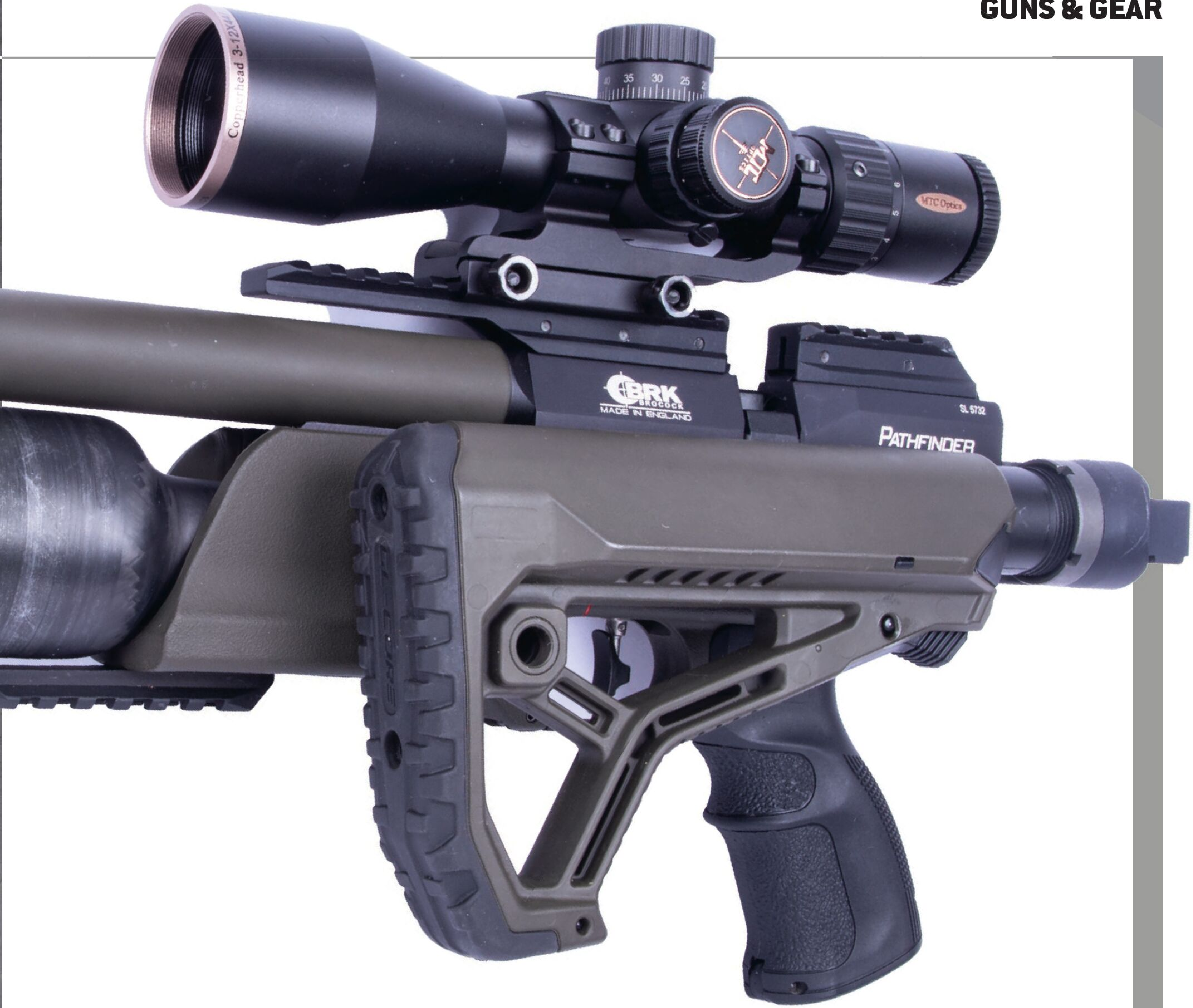
SHOT CAPACITY: Around 220 (.22), around 200 (.177)

VARIATION (10 SHOTS): 7fps

AVERAGE ENERGY: 11½ft/lbs

WEBSITE: brocock.co.uk

PRICE: £1,449.99



A ONE SIZE FITS ALL RIFLE

Dave Barham reveals the BRK Pathfinder XR O.D Green, a new look compact hunting rifle that is based on a popular predecessor

Launched last year, the original BRK Pathfinder XR has long since proven its worth and popularity, especially amongst pest controllers. There aren't that many compact, lightweight hunting rifles out there, especially ones that fold up small enough to put in a small rucksack. Now there's a new addition to the family in the form of this O.D Green model.

WHAT IS THE LAW?

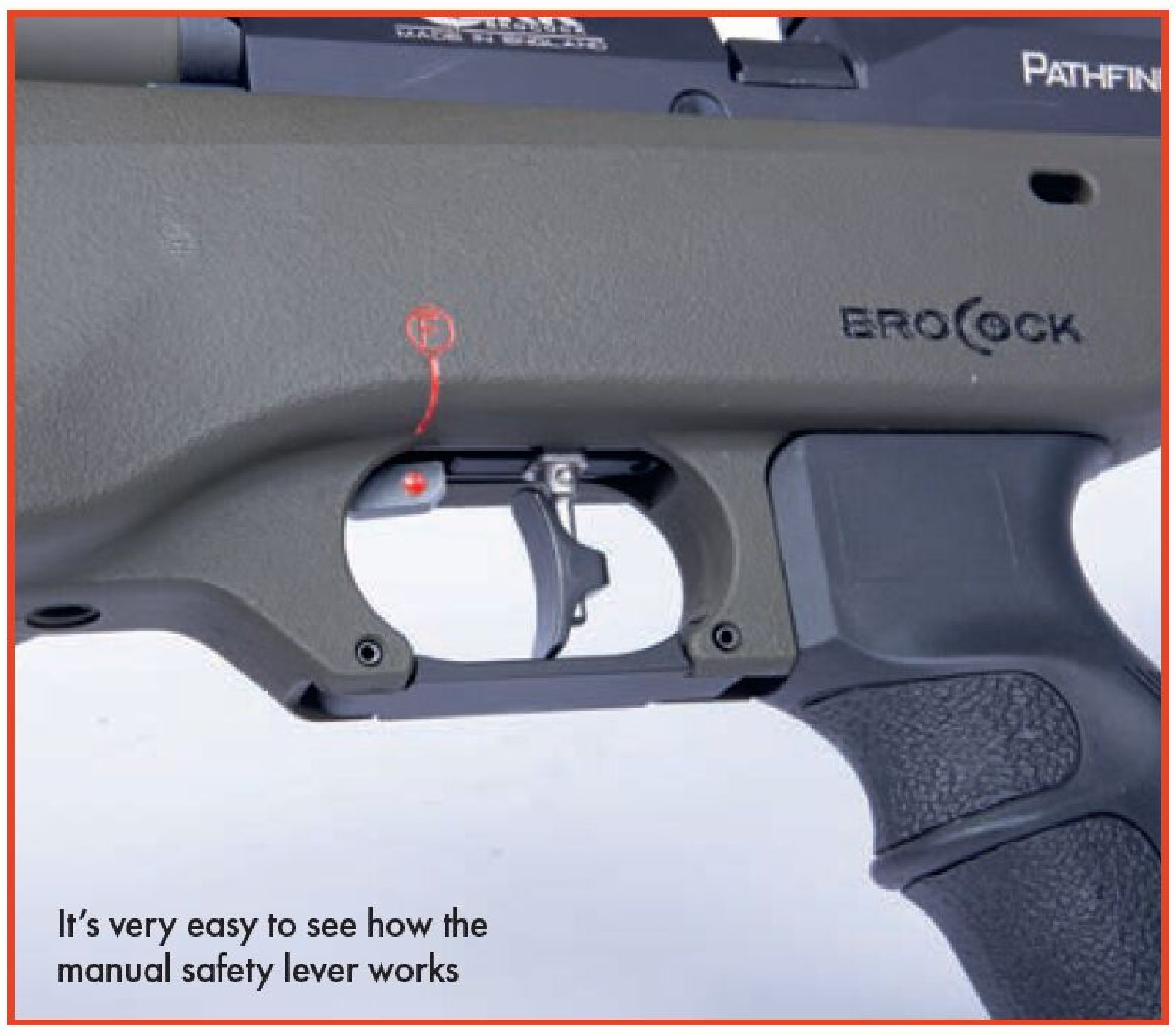
There's always misinformation floating around on social media that this style of rifle isn't legal. Do you really think that a company as big as BRK would produce a rifle that wasn't UK legal? The main confusion seems to be the actual length of the rifle when folded and the barrel length itself, so here is an excerpt from a statement issued by BRK on the matter:

"Brocock confirms that the Brocock Pathfinder XR conforms with the UK Firearms Act 1968 in that it is an air weapon and is exempt from defining gun length as specified under Section 5 (1) (aba).

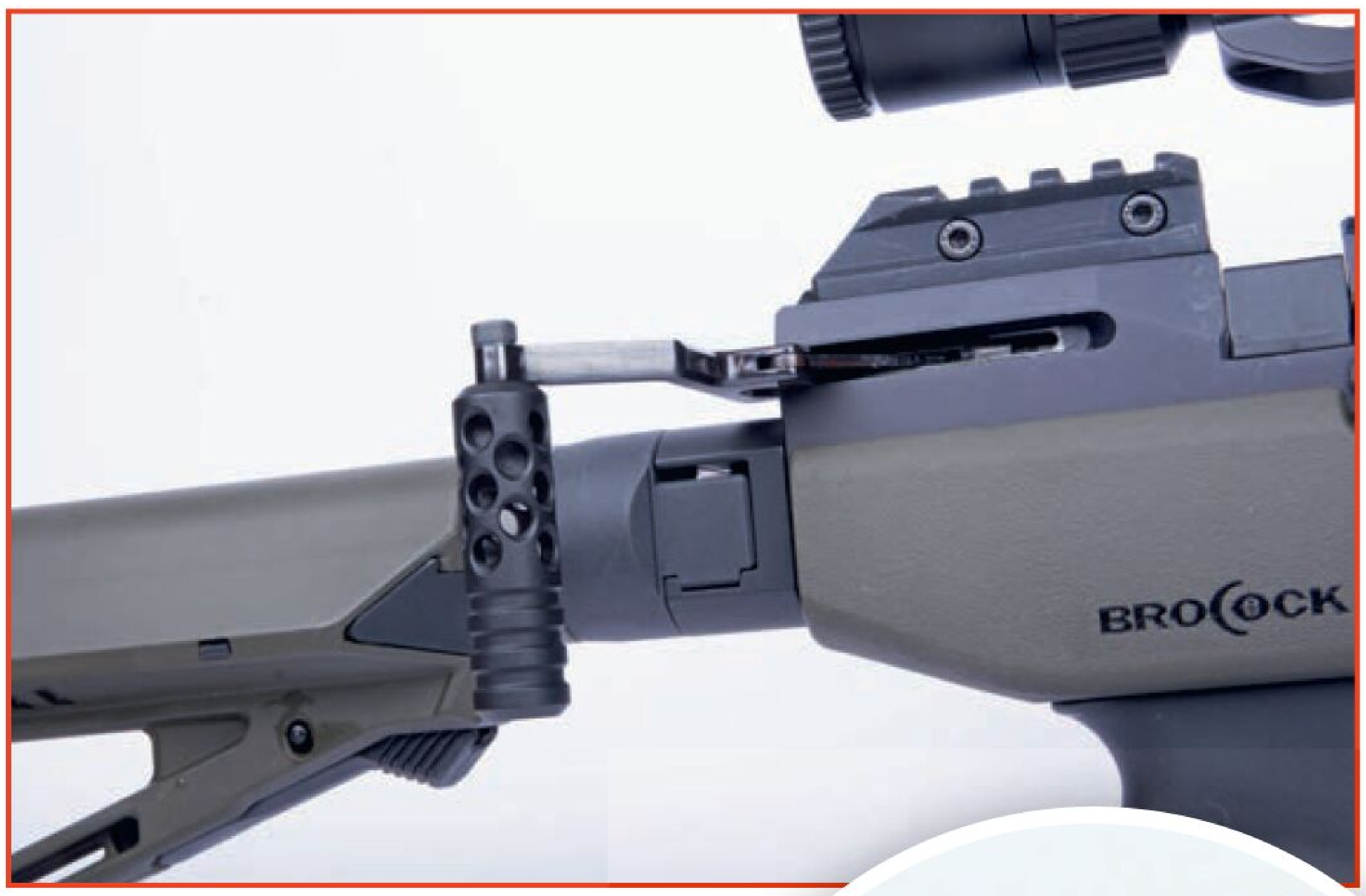
Brocock also defines the Brocock Pathfinder XR as "an air rifle, which does not exceed a muzzle energy of 12ft/lbs and is therefore not classified as especially dangerous and is exempt from the need for a Section 1 licence under the Firearms Act 1968".

So, it is in fact a legal airgun, even if the barrel is only 256mm long.

This BRK MF-121 silencer really makes a huge difference to the sound output



It's very easy to see how the manual safety lever works



The drop-down handle on the sidelever is brilliant

The long-reach Foster connector is included

HUMA REGULATOR AND VARIABLE POWER

As you would expect, a rifle of this quality requires the very best regulator, and just like its other PCP rifles, BRK has installed a HUMA unit which is linked to a floating hammer system. There is also a variable power dial on the right-hand-side of the action, which allows you to dial the power down – handy for shooting at close quarters in your back garden, or within the confines of a small barn when ratting.

This regulator also comes into its own in the FAC versions, which are available in .177 (18ft/lbs), .22 (27ft/lbs) and .25 (30ft/lbs).

FOLDING STOCK

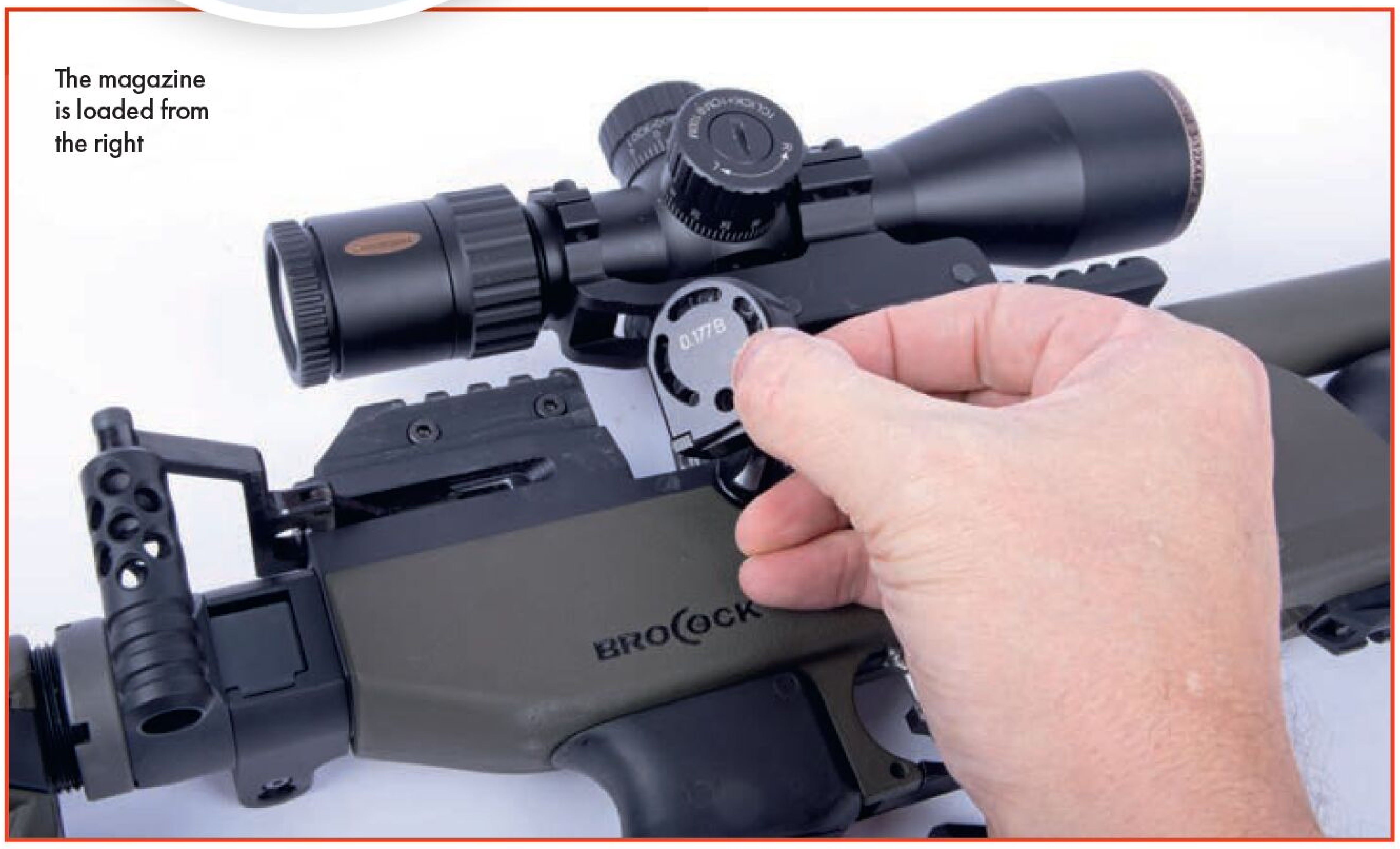
The Pathfinder XR O.D Green is a full-power, UK-legal sub 12ft/lbs air rifle, which follows a similar concept to the hugely successful Ranger XR predecessor, but with a little more beef to it and a much higher shot count thanks to the 300cc carbon kevlar bottle.

At present, this rifle is only available as a kit, which includes the rather nifty carry bag that also has back straps, so it can be used as a rucksack, plus a colour coordinated BRK MF-121 silencer is included, too. This silencer really does quieten things down, and together with the fully shrouded barrel it makes it whisper quiet.

Weighing in at just 6.4lbs, it's one of the lightest hunting rifles on the market and is already a massive hit with hunters.

To collapse the stock you simply grab hold of it near the joint and lift the butt of the stock upwards to release the mechanism. You can then fold the stock to the left so that it butts up against the main body of the rifle. To open it out again, simply

The rifle comes with a single shot tray

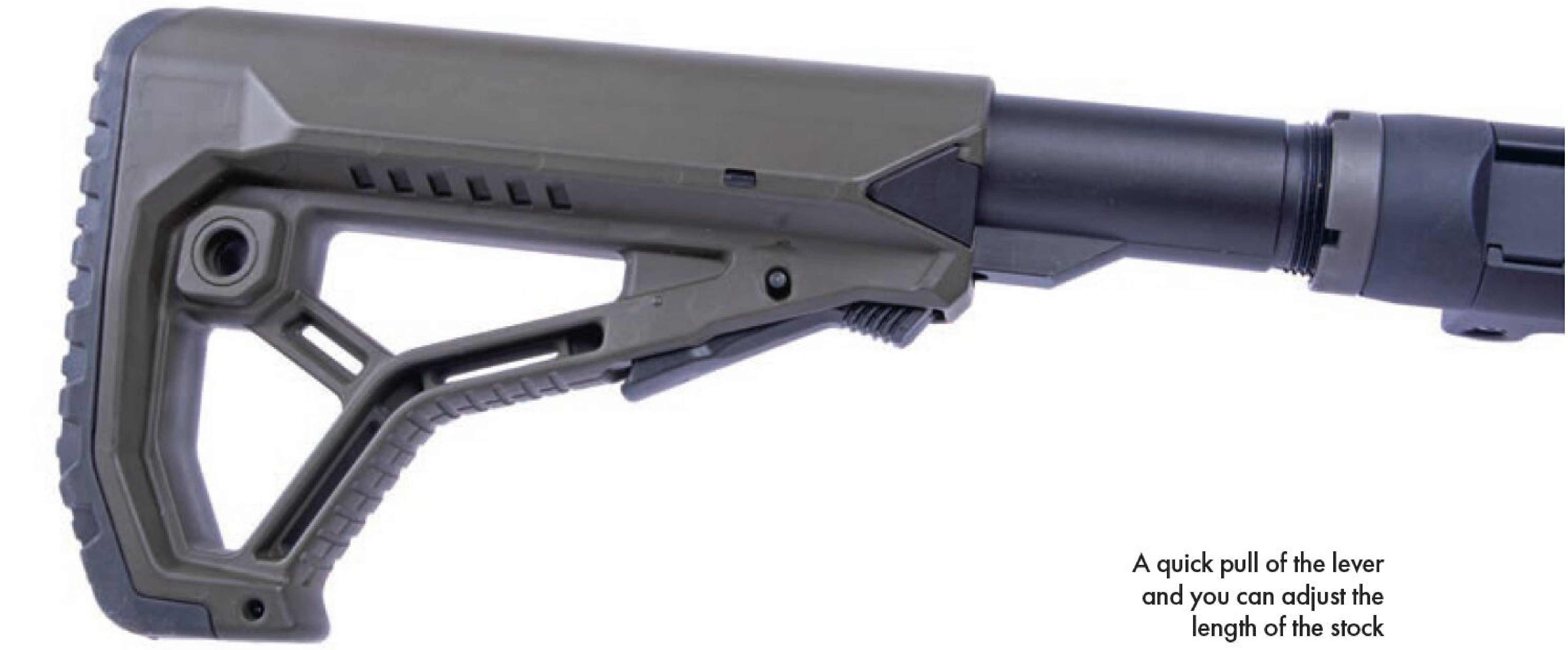


The magazine is loaded from the right

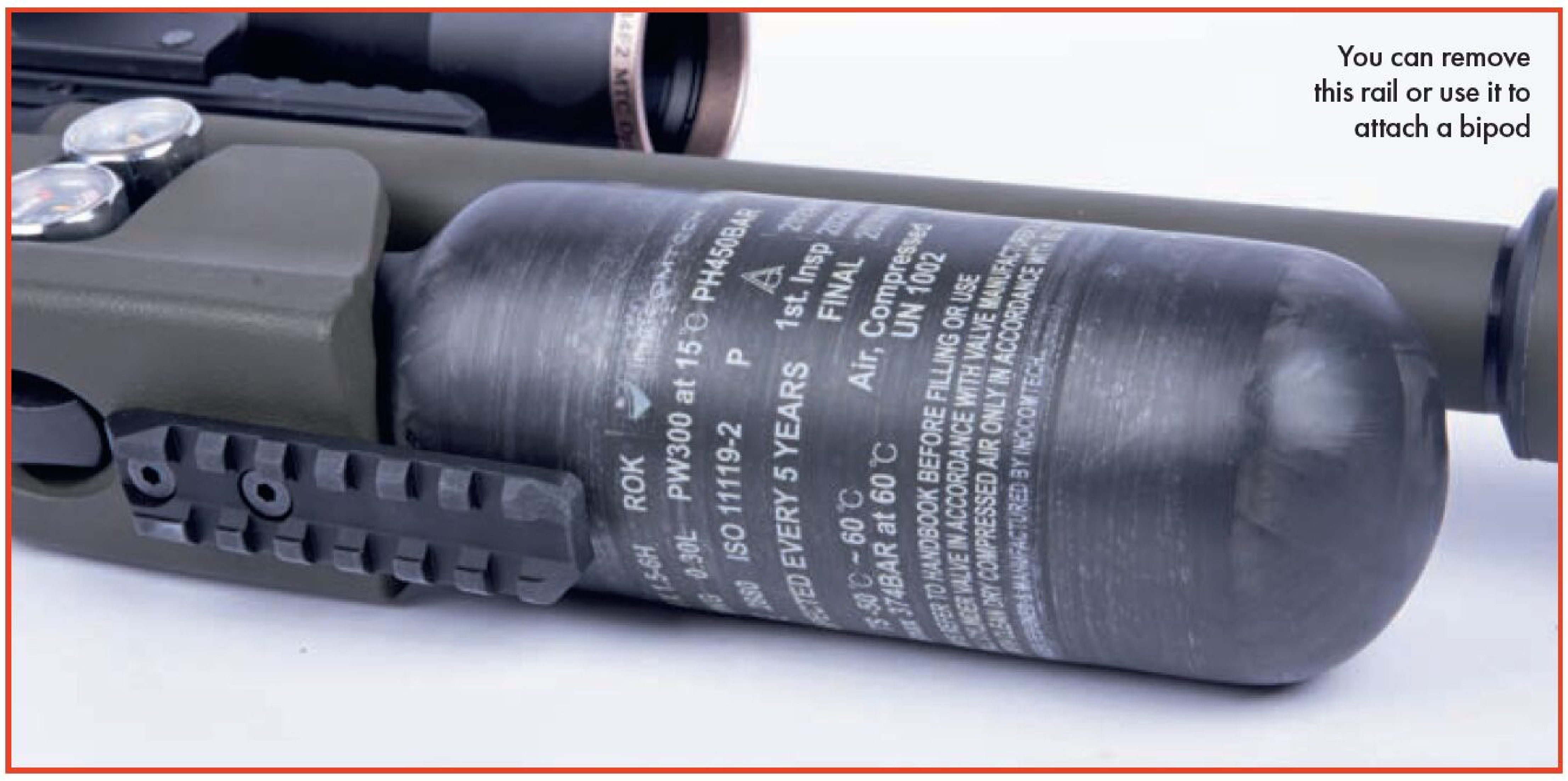
push the stock to the right until the locking mechanism goes "click" and locks it all into place. It's absolutely rock solid, too, which I know has been a concern with many other folding stock rifles from other manufacturers. There's absolutely no play in it once folded out.

You can extend or reduce the length of pull by depressing the small lever housed inside the skeleton butt section, then slide the butt in or out to your desired length. I must make a point of noting at this point that the butt cap itself is made from a rubberised material, with horizontal grooves cut into it for added support. It just adds that extra feeling of solidness when the rifle is shouldered, no matter what you happen to be wearing.

As far as the Polymer stock goes, I really like the AK pistol grip, as not only does it look the part, it also adds a different dimension to the handling, too.



A quick pull of the lever and you can adjust the length of the stock



You can remove this rail or use it to attach a bipod

ROK
PW300 at 15℃ PH450BAR
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FINAL
Air, Compressed
UN 1002
-60℃
374BAR at 60℃
REFER TO HANDBOOK BEFORE FILLING OR USE
USE VALVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH VALVE MANUFACTURER
COMPRESSED AIR ONLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH

SIDELEVER AND MAGAZINES

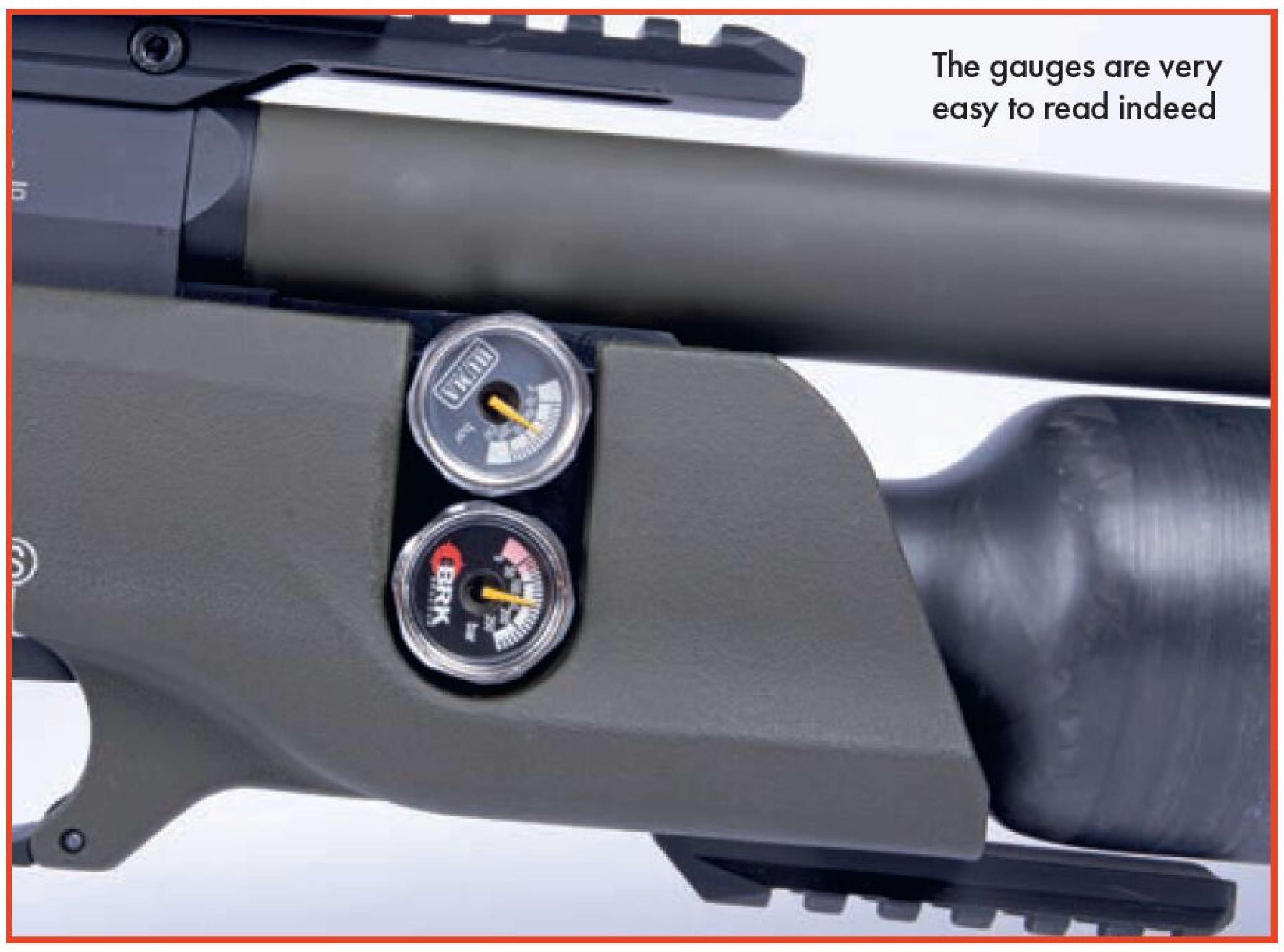
If you like your sidelever rifles then you're going to love this one. It has been ergonomically designed and uses a relatively short stroke with minimal effort to cock the rifle. It features a machined aluminium drop-down handle, which sits really well between your thumb and forefinger when cocking. I particularly like the way that they have drilled it out to reduce weight and also add some grip for use in wet weather.

Brocock's new self-indexing magazines are also superb, you get 11 shots in .22 and 13 shots in .177. They're the "flip-up" cover version and are extremely easy to load – turn the inner of the magazine all the way clockwise and drop a pellet in to hold it in place, then fill the remaining holes with pellets, flip the lid back over and you're done. The magazine inserts from right to left, and it's magnetic, so it clicks into place and stays there. This rifle also comes supplied with a single shot tray.

When it comes to filling the 300cc bottle, the Pathfinder utilises BRK's long-reach, quick-fill Foster connector, and the fill port is cleverly housed underneath the main body of the rifle beneath a magnetic fill port cap that simply pulls off.

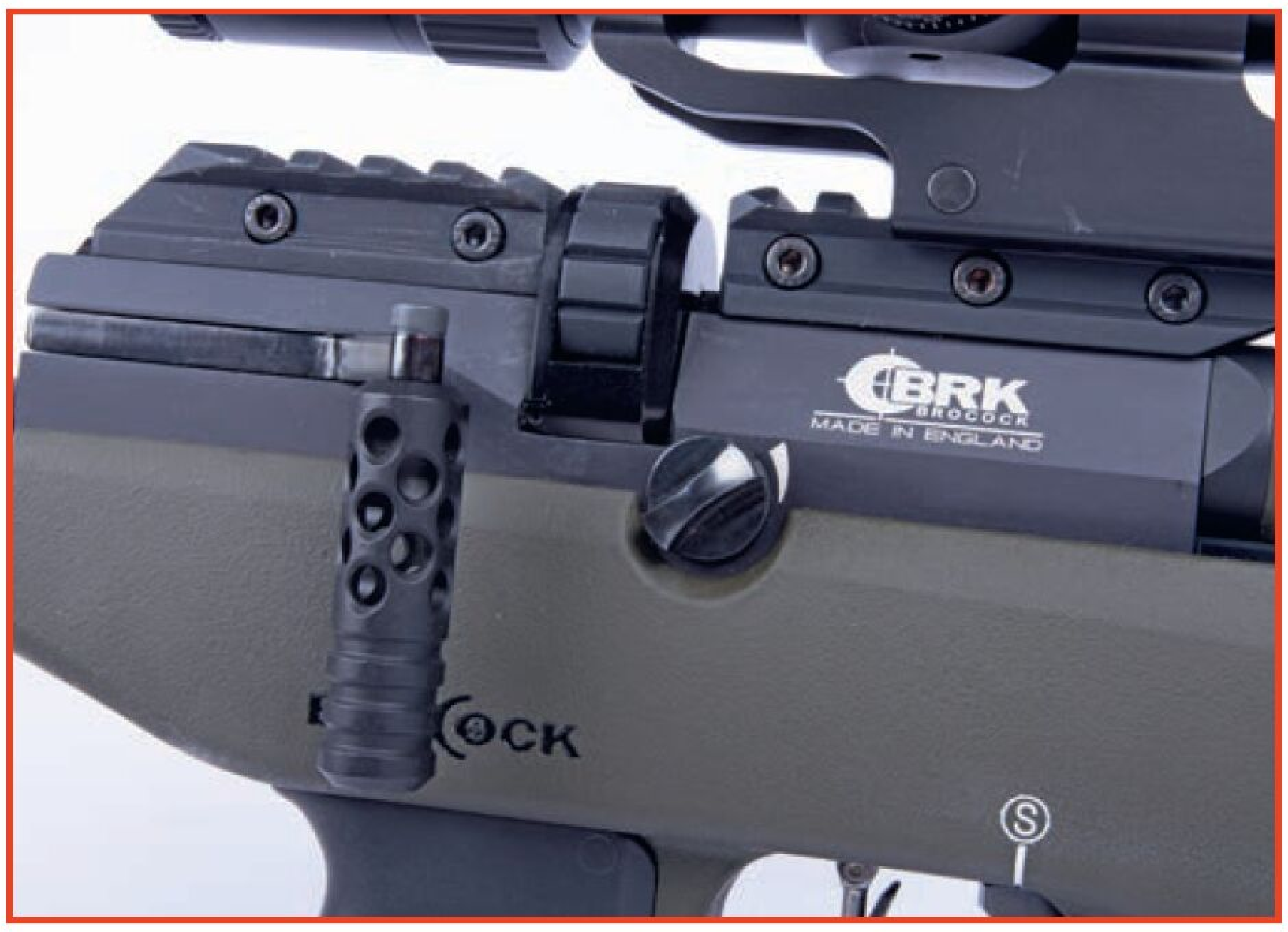
TRIGGER AND SAFETY

The Pathfinder XR features BRK's classic two-stage adjustable trigger unit, which can be adjusted for pull weight, length of stage and blade position. The rifle sent to me for test had a reasonably short first stage



The gauges are very easy to read indeed

You can adjust the power output with this dial



BRK
BROCOCK
MADE IN ENGLAND
BROCOCK

BRK
PATHFINDER

There's plenty of room inside for the rifle

set, coming to an abrupt halt as it reached the second stage, which then takes very little effort to pull. It's clean, crisp and very easy to get used to – as you would expect from a BRK unit. The blade is gently curved and the pad of your finger sits very comfortably on it.

There is a manual safety switch housed inside the trigger guard immediately in front of the trigger. As far as pull weight goes, it's just over 1lb straight from the factory, according to my scales.

PICATINNY RAILS

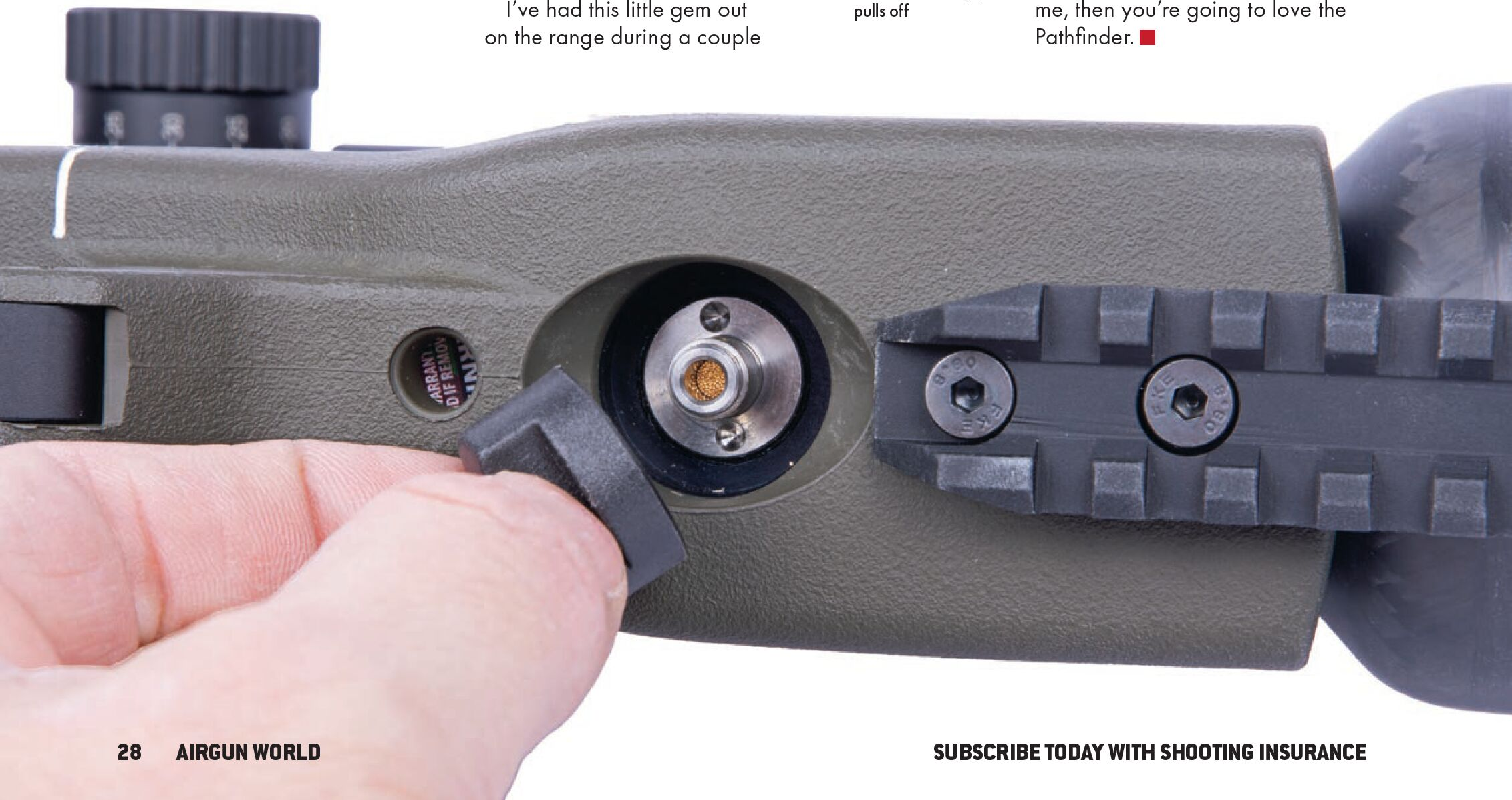
This rifle comes supplied with a two-piece Picatinny scope rail, with 50mm at the rear and 145mm in front. The magazine sits a couple of millimetres underneath the base of the rails, so you can use a single-piece mount if needs be, but more importantly, you can put a thermal or a night-vision unit on top with no problems. There's another 75mm Picatinny rail underneath the bottle on the fore grip to attach a bipod, and this can easily be removed if that is so required.

THE REAL TEST

This is another one of those wonderful rifles that I'm really struggling to put down. It really is such great fun to shoot. Because it's such a small, compact unit the balance point is extended to a "palm" rather than a single point, and it just feels great to shoot in all manner of positions. The fact that you can adjust the length of pull via the extendable butt section means that this really is a "one size fits all" rifle, with a wide range of adjustment for all body sizes.

I've had this little gem out on the range during a couple of day sessions, coupled with three evenings at one of my rat permissions. It hasn't missed a beat, and as you would imagine it is insanely accurate.

In the end, what you're paying for here is exceptional quality and performance. Everything about the Pathfinder XR screams quality and purpose. If you're a hunter, like me, then you're going to love the Pathfinder. ■



The fill port is hidden under a magnetic cover, which simply pulls off

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The new Smart model of our Delta Wolf represents a fresh take on our revolutionary electronic PCP tactical air rifle. We've made it smarter by loading it with simpler electronic programs that compute without the need of any integral chronograph. Not only is the Delta Wolf Smart simpler to use...

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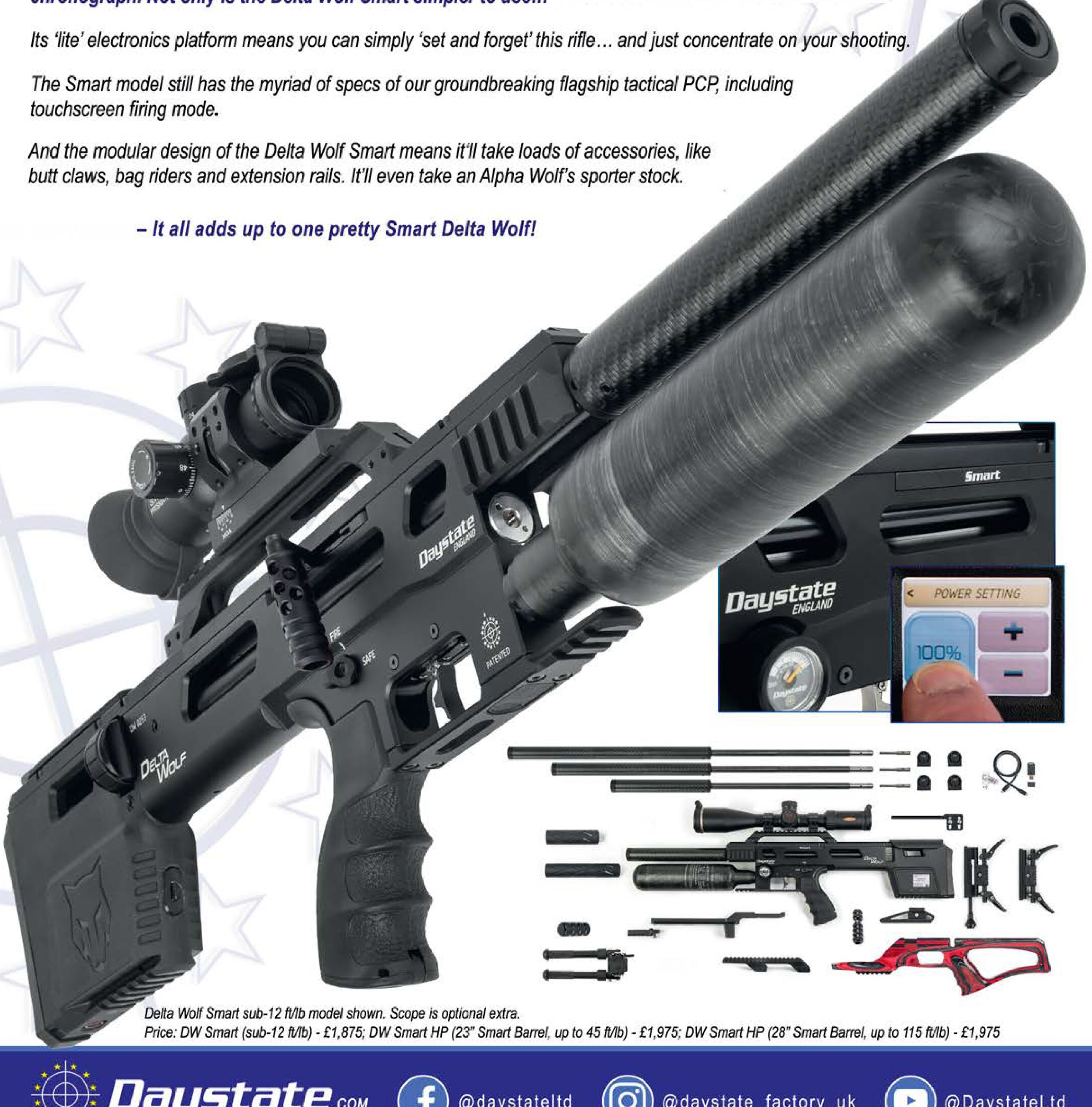
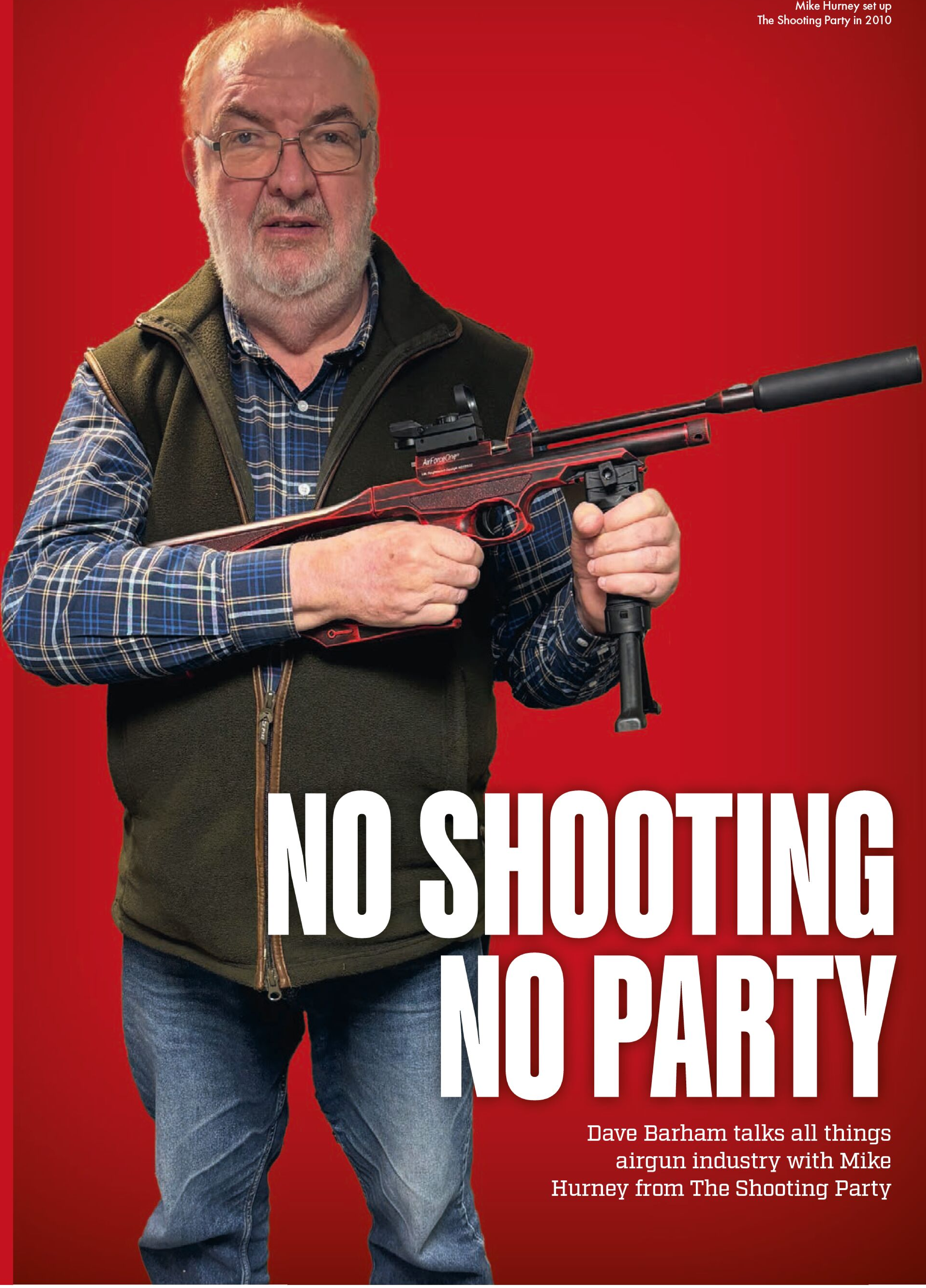
And the modular design of the Delta Wolf Smart means it'll take loads of accessories, like butt claws, bag riders and extension rails. It'll even take an Alpha Wolf's sporter stock.

– It all adds up to one pretty Smart Delta Wolf!



Delta Wolf Smart sub-12 ft/lb model shown. Scope is optional extra.
Price: DW Smart (sub-12 ft/lb) - £1,875; DW Smart HP (23" Smart Barrel, up to 45 ft/lb) - £1,975; DW Smart HP (28" Smart Barrel, up to 115 ft/lb) - £1,975



Mike Hurney set up
The Shooting Party in 2010

NO SHOOTING NO PARTY

Dave Barham talks all things airgun industry with Mike Hurney from The Shooting Party

How did you first get involved in the airgun industry, and what attracted you to this field?

I've been shooting for over 40 years — from shotguns to rimfire and centrefire rifles — as well as airguns. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, some colleagues and I invested in a business called "Boysstuff". Its then owner, Richard North, also owned AGS scopes and Logun Rifles, which shared the same premises. There was a perceived conflict of interest, so we bought that business as well and I became more directly involved in the day-to-day management because of my interest in the sport. Subsequently, we also purchased Webley & Scott.

I established The Shooting Party in 2010 in order to develop novel products at an attractive price point to offer quality and value to the airgun community

What are the most significant changes you've observed in the British airgun market over the past decade?

Probably the two biggest trends have been the growing dominance of PCPs over spring-powered guns. They are now ubiquitous and available from under £400 to many thousands of pounds, offering specifications that we could hardly dream of 10 or 20 years ago, making it a very democratic sport in terms of cost and ownership.

The second trend has been the growth of online shopping. Even 10 years ago only a few pioneer retailers offered products online. I would hazard a guess that virtually every retailer now has some online presence, and products such as optics are now predominantly sold online. This therefore gives retailers unrivalled reach geographically in the UK and beyond.

Can you tell us about a particularly innovative airgun product you've worked on or encountered recently?

We have been selling chronographs for the last 15 years — various models and specifications — but many had limitations, such as only working in doors, needing additional lighting, had flimsy "knitting needle" sensors, or required attaching to barrels with elastic bands or Blue Tac. Last year, we started working with one of our suppliers to produce the AirForceOne® MuzzleMount Chrono, the world's first, self-contained chronograph that screws directly onto the ½in UNF thread found on 99% of all modern airguns. It provides readings in joules and ft/lbs; velocities in either mps or fps; stores up to 100 shot readings on the unit and will cater for all airgun types — spring, CO_2 or PCP and will handle all calibres from .177,.20,.22,.25 up to and including .30. And it will

The Shooting Party's Staffordshire showroom is open six days a week

The showroom is home to a range of guns and rifles from leading manufacturers work in total darkness. I think it's our proudest achievement.

How has the growing emphasis on environmental concerns affected airgun manufacturing and design?

Not as much as it should have. When we were facing the prospect of a ban on the use of lead pellets, the response of the ammunition manufacturers was glacial. I'm not sure that the threat has gone away completely, or forever. The manufacturers need to — hopefully collectively — put time and resources into developing viable and affordable alternatives to lead.

What challenges does the British airgun industry face in terms of regulations and legislation?

The pressures are relentless and ongoing. The direction of travel is for ever more legislation. The whole shooting community must work together to better educate the legislators and the public about the positives our sport has to offer.

How do you see the role of social media and online communities in shaping the airgun market?

It's enormous and growing, though not all of it good. I think that as YouTube, Facebook and others continue to flip-flop over the representation of guns on their platforms, the airgun industry should look at developing its own platform, or platforms, that don't run the risk of being ghosted.

What trends do you foresee in airgun technology and design over the next five years?

I think we will see more manufacturers introducing computer technologies into their guns. For a long time, Daystate was the only stand out user of chip-based technologies, but more recently the American company Skout has entered that space successfully.

How does the British airgun industry compare to those in other countries, particularly in terms of quality and innovation?

For a tiny island, we really punch above our weight. Companies such as Air Arms, Daystate and BSA are truly global brands, offering excellent quality, great functionality and value for money.

What advice would you give to someone looking to start a career in the airgun industry?

I would say that alongside a passion for the sport, anyone wishing to enter the gun trade should develop transferable skills, such as IT, accounting or sales training. Then maybe try and secure weekend work in a retailer and start to see whether the world of guns is really for you.

What role do airguns play in introducing newcomers to shooting sports, and how can the industry encourage greater participation in them?

It's vital. Just about every shooter I know started off shooting airguns. The cost of entry and participation is low, especially when compared with live firing alternatives, so the industry should run airgun taster days. I know you have gone out of your way to show youngsters enjoying our sport in *Airgun World*, so keep it up. Clubs should offer really low-cost membership and qualified tuition. Look at some of the initiatives that the US has.

JTS AIRGUNS
FOAM FIGHTER
SU-27
USA
£129

From pellets to watches and scopes, there isn't much you can't browse through at the showroom

> **One of the two biggest trends has been the growing dominance of PCPs over spring-powered guns**

Can you share an interesting or unusual anecdote from your time working in the industry?

I have got to meet some great people and many unusual characters. I've travelled to fascinating places. On my last trip to China, immediately prior to the coronavirus outbreak, I was visiting Xiamen, a city in the south east of the country, in the middle of a heat wave. It was 50°C and the air conditioning couldn't cope when I landed. By the time I had gotten through customs I was literally soaked from head to foot with sweat. My hosts explained that the heat and humidity was worse than anyone could remember and their circa 700 employees had been switched to working through the night, so there would only be a token presence in each section of the factory to show me the processes used to make our products. The first section they wanted to show me was the heat treatment plant. ■

For more information on The Shooting Party, visit shootingparty.uk

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IT'S THE SALE OF THE "SENTRY!™"

The Lee Enfield SENTRY is a radical new design of a regulated PCP with a striking "Sports-Pup" appearance, combining a Forestock constructed from well-moulded Ballistic Polymer and a Thumb-Hole Buttstock, with adjustable cheek piece, made from European Beech, which combines light-weight with great grip and control.

Rifle only £399 Delivered!*

Rifle + Bipod + 3L Cylinder + Tactical Case only ~~£745~~ £695 Delivered!* Save £50

- Fully regulated action 125+ highly consistant shots in .22 - 100 + in .177 at 12 FPE of energy.
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A complete PCP package

Tactical Gun Case

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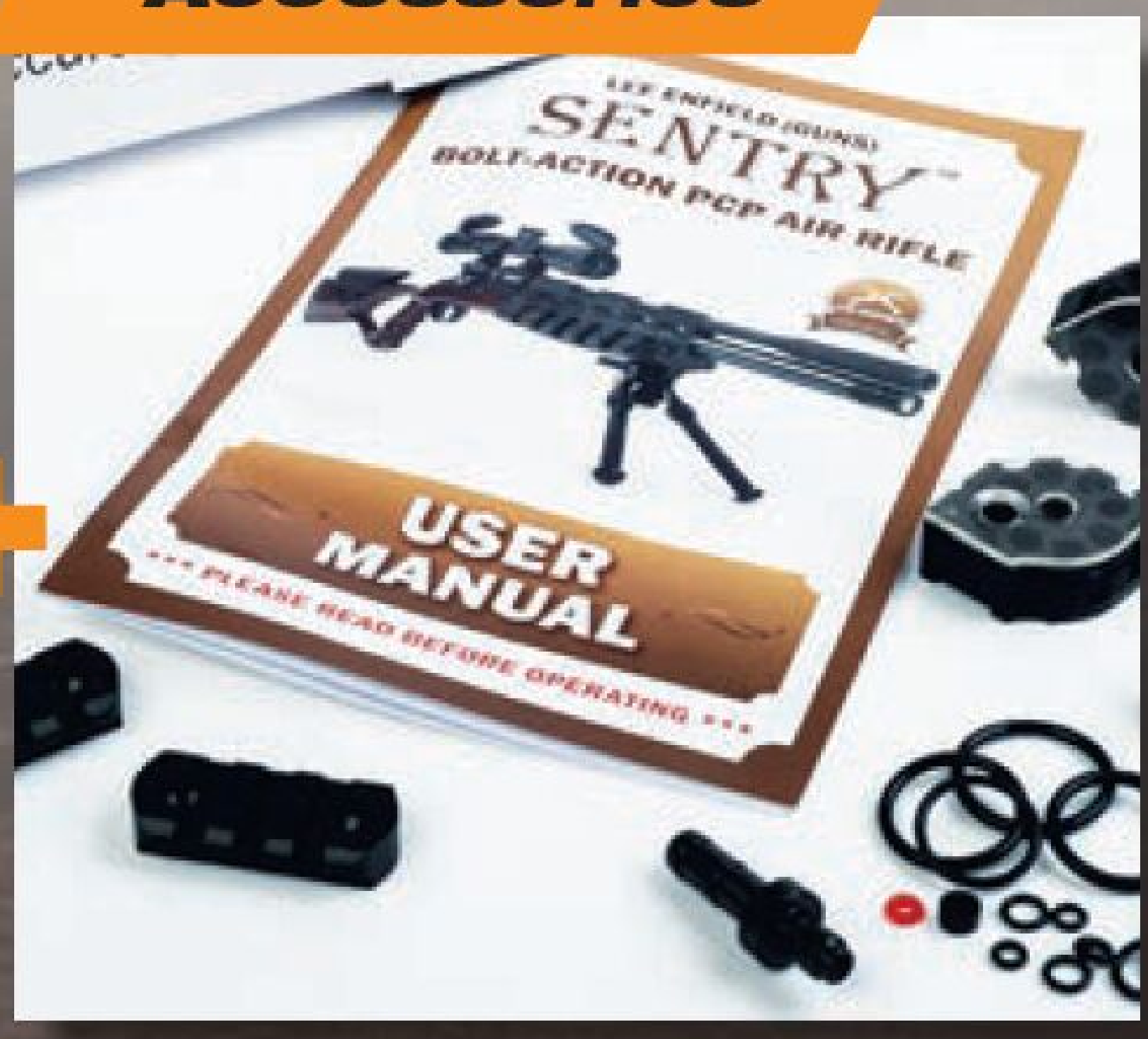
ADRAS Bipod

+

3L Bottle

+

Accessories



Be on Guard-make your NEW regulated PCP a SENTRY!

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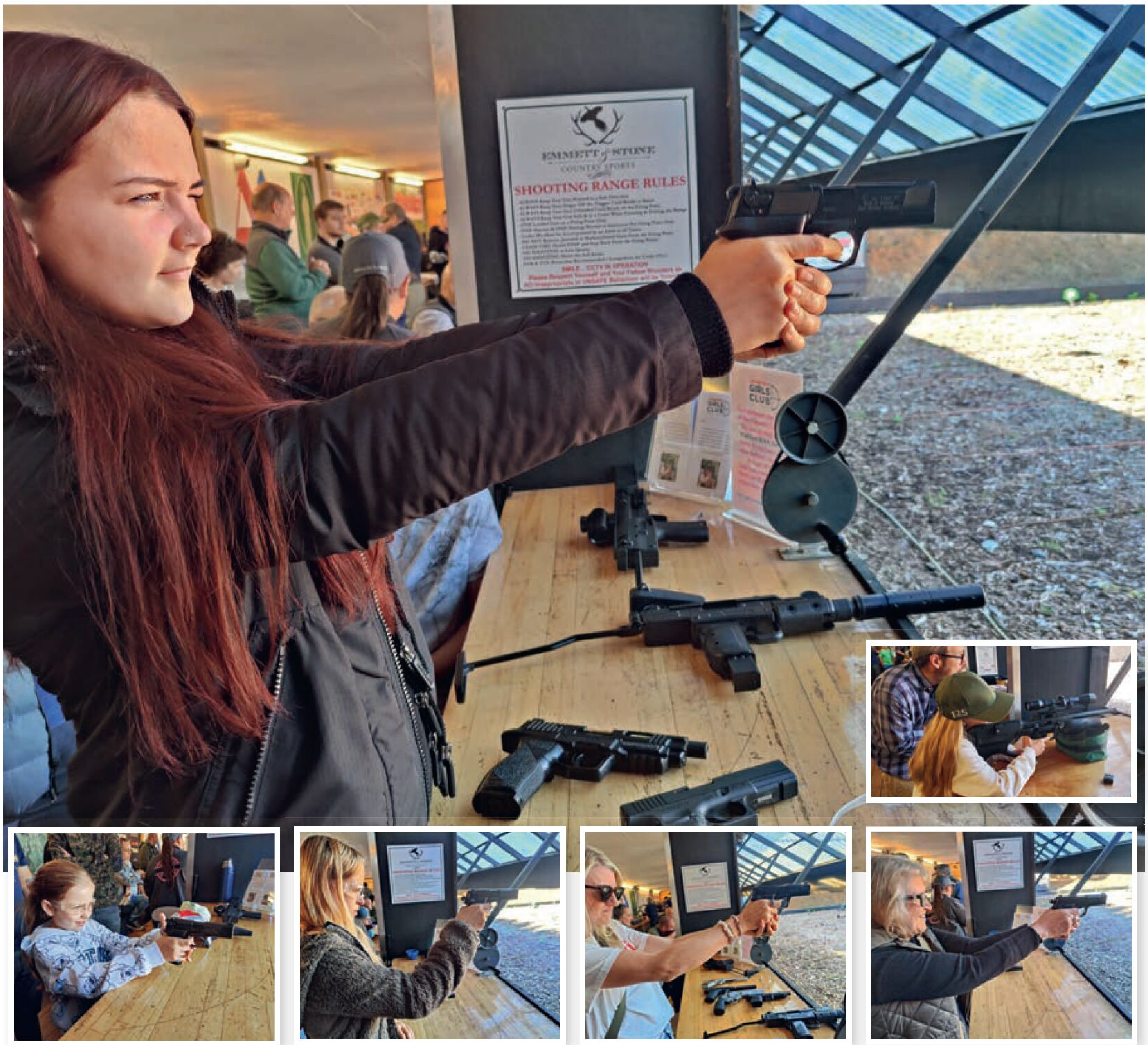
A SPORT FOR ALL

The launch of the Umarex Girls Club at the Emmett & Stone range day back in September helped to break down barriers and introduce a brand new audience to our sport, explains Jason Curtis



The launch was a phenomenal success for the UGC, with girls of all ages pulling the trigger on the range

Emmett & Stone is the local shooting club for Amanda and myself. We have been members for a couple of years now, so we are part of the furniture and are known for our large collection of guns, the UBC and also the events we run for Umarex and John Rothery Wholesale (JRW).

Besides the shooting range, Emmett & Stone has a huge shop, with something for everyone. The gun room is a feast for the eyes, with a vast selection of shotguns, rifles and some of the most beautiful knives I have ever seen. The shop itself has everything else: airguns, optics, clothing, footwear, items for outdoor pursuits, gun safes, targets, gift ideas and even

CONTACT

UMAREXBOYSCLUB.CO.UK
UMAREXGIRLSCLUB.CO.UK
UMAREX.COM
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GR8FUN.NET

a section for man's best friend. To top it all off, the staff are absolutely amazing.

One Saturday morning, one of the owners, Tony Stone, mentioned he would be holding a range day for rifles and pistols. Before getting in touch with JRW to see if they would like to send some Umarex products for demonstration, he asked if the UBC could help on the day. Never passing up an opportunity to shoot and encourage folks into our great sport, we accepted immediately. A few weeks later, I got an email from Harry at JRW asking if we could attend this event on their behalf. A date was set for 14 September and it was full steam ahead.

To give you a full view of what was going to happen, we need to step back in time to the British Shooting Show back in February. While running the range for Umarex (something we take great pride and pleasure in and try to improve year on year), Amanda had an idea ticking away at the back of her mind. As usual, she was trying to encourage as many female shooters as possible to come and have a go. However, she was met with the usual responses: "I'm just here to watch my partner," "I don't know how to," and the common, "I thought it was just for boys," due to our club's name.

The UBC name came about as a joke on the Airgun BBS forum back in March 2008 and just snowballed from there. Had I actually planned to start a shooting club and known what we'd be doing today, I might have chosen a different, more inclusive name — maybe The Amazing Cookie Shooting Club.

Or maybe not.

Anyway, Amanda really works hard to bring lady shooters into our sport, and she genuinely enjoys teaching them to shoot for the first time. During one of the few quiet periods at the show, she shared her idea to start an Umarex Girls Club alongside the boys' club, so women could feel they are part of the shooting community. I loved it. I mentioned it to Paddy (our events manager), and he agreed it was a good idea.

Fast forward to IWA in Germany, where we had a meeting with Bevin Lesueur, the Umarex UK area manager, and pitched our idea to him. He thought that getting more women into the sport was a great idea. Later, we also gained the backing of Sean O'Driscoll, managing director of JRW, who said he would be very happy to support the initiative.

WALTHER
REIGN
UMAREX
850M2

Carrie-Ann (left) and Amanda: the driving forces behind the new UGC

Amanda was thrilled at the prospect of getting more ladies into shooting, and ideas began to flow thick and fast. The first thing she really needed was someone to help run this new venture. While I had the experience and knowledge to help along the way, my bearded face and lack of feminine looks simply wouldn't cut it for helping run a girls' club on the front line. Enter Carrie-Ann Johnson. "CA", as she is known, is one of our shooting buddies at Emmett & Stone. Luckily, she and Amanda get on like a house on fire. When they're together, their banter on the range puts most blokes to shame. She was the ideal candidate to help run the club. CA was thrilled to be asked and shared Amanda's enthusiasm. Before I knew it, we were designing flyers, leaflets, pin badges and business cards to promote the new club.

> **"Carrie-Ann and Amanda get on like a house on fire — when they are on the range together they put most of the blokes there to shame"**

READY FOR THE LAUNCH

With all the ideas in place, the girls needed a launch. So, Amanda went back to Tony at Emmett & Stone to ask if they could launch on their range day. Tony was very supportive, loved the idea and said he would help promote and support the girls as much as he could. Amanda then persuaded the manager, George, to let us have a rifle lane as well as the pistol range — how could he say no? Everything was set.

A few weeks before the range day, Sean from JRW emailed and said he'd like to donate a Walther RM8 Varmint as a prize for the girls to give away at the launch. Amanda and CA were ecstatic and felt deeply honoured, even more so when Bevin from Umarex donated a nickel Walther CP88. These were both very generous donations, and we would like to thank them for their generosity and support. It was decided that anyone who shot on the Umarex Boys & Girls Club range on the day would receive a free raffle ticket to enter the prize draw. The RM8 was open to all shooters, but the girls decided the CP88 would be reserved for female shooters only, which was fitting for their big day. We also prepared a goody bag filled with pellets, CO_2 cannisters, caps, badges, patches and pens as a prize for the fastest shooter on

EVENTS TEAM
UMAREX GIRLS CLUB
EVENTS TEAM
Couples that Shoot Together, Stay Together.
Founders of the Umarex Boys & Girls Club
Jason & Amanda Curtis
This really is a sport that can be enjoyed by all, it's a lot of fun as well as very challenging. Local clubs are a great way of learning the art of shooting and you will find it hard to meet a more helpful and friendlier bunch of people.
UMAREX GIRLS CLUB est. 2024
Hello
Welcome to the Umarex Girls Club, the sister club to the long running Umarex Boys Club who have been organizing on-line competitions and open days since 2008 not forgetting managing the ranges for Umarex at some of the top UK shooting shows.
An Online Shooting Club for Girls Run by Girls
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UmarexGirlsClub@gmail.com
Not Just for Boys
Give it a try
The Joy of Shooting
www.UmarexGirlsClub.co.uk
UmarexGirlsClub@gmail.com

No expense is spared in promoting the UGC, its aims and objectives

the steel plates made by Dan from Gr8fun Targets.

A few days before the event, JRW sent a pallet of guns, CO_2 cannisters and pellets to Emmett & Stone. Amanda collected them so I could prepare them and add scopes, red dots and so on.

The day had arrived. At the range, we met CA, and the girls looked very smart in their new grey Umarex Girls Club Events Team jackets (designed by Paddy) with a fetching pink logo (the boys are in red). Even before I had even finished setting up the targets — which included a steel plate action shooting setup for the pistols, and a heap of splatter burst targets set at 25m, plus some knock-downs for the rifles — a few early birds were already waiting to shoot. While laying out the guns from JRW and some of my own, I showed them to the folks waiting to help them decide what would suit their needs.

The rest of the lanes were now filled by other manufacturers, and the girls were ready to launch their club as the crowds started to arrive. CA took charge of the rifle lane, I ran the pistol section, and Amanda invited folks to have a go, explaining the launch of the UGC.

For the first time at one of these events, we had more lady shooters than ever before. Husbands and wives, boyfriends and girlfriends, dads and daughters, mums and daughters, sisters and groups of girls — all age groups were represented, too. We couldn't have asked for a better turnout for the launch, and we didn't stop all day.

Nearly all the female shooters showed genuine interest in the guns they were shooting, asking for recommendations for new shooters (the CP88, naturally), or budget-friendly options. Some with disabilities wanted to get into the sport, so we helped work out the best choices for them. I spent more time with shooters than usual, as they were keen for advice. Many even came back to show us what they had bought in the shop or to say they'd ordered something not in stock. The action shooting was a big hit; the plates are large enough for a beginner to hit, giving a satisfying "ting" when struck. Many shot just for fun, without worrying about competition time, and that was fine by me, as having fun is what the UBC and the new UGC are all about.

As the day drew to a close, Amanda asked Tony to draw the raffle for the prizes. The CP88 was won by a young lady, Belen Regan. The RM8 was won by a young lad, Connor Craggy. Connor's dad couldn't believe his son had won, especially as he had planned to buy him an RM8, so he decided to kit it out for him with a scope and some other accessories.

The day was a tremendous success. Both Amanda and CA were amazing and did the newly founded Umarex Girls Club proud. We also couldn't have done it without the support and generosity of Umarex, JRW and everyone at Emmett & Stone. A special thanks also goes to our good friends from our regular Saturday morning shooting sessions who helped on the rifle lanes throughout the day. In particular, we remember our dear friend Darren Gilbert (Daz), who sadly passed away only a few days later. May you rest in peace, Daz, listening to Queen and zeroing in yet another rifle — you will be greatly missed by us all. ■

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GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Pete Evans samples the delights of a lightly used Walther LGV, a lovely rifle that is sadly no longer in production

Some things are only fully appreciated when they're no longer around, and this could easily be said of the Walther LGV. Although the rifle under scrutiny this month was launched in 2012, it is not the first gun to wear the LGV moniker. The original Walther LGV was a break-barrel 10m target rifle, available in the 1960s, which was highly desirable at the time and perhaps more so today.

Fast-forward 50 years, and this new LGV model was made in Germany, at the Umarex factory, before disappearing from its catalogue a few years ago. In fact, all the spring-powered guns were dropped from the Walther range, presumably to focus on its CO_2 and pre-charged guns. This is a shame, as I had positive experiences with the Terrus and Century, which were less costly than the LGV. This history

Hunters need to make use of natural rests when using a heavy gun

suggested that the LGV could be an even better gun, though with no new stock available, it would be a case of playing the long game in the hope of picking up a used model.

Recently, patience was rewarded when a lightly used gun materialised, fitting my purposes very nicely.

DIFFERENT MODELS

Navigating the LGV range can be a bit confusing, as this gun was available in many subtly different forms. These included variations in stock materials, adjustable cheekpieces and butt pads, open sights and trigger blade types. There may well be others, but those listed are the main ones.

My own example is an LGV Master Pro .22, which means it has a muzzle weight with the option to fit a moderator, no open sights, a standard cheekpiece and an adjustable butt pad.

Break barrels can sometimes be criticised for an insecure breech lock-up

First impressions are of a substantial gun, which would be best suited to an older teenager or an adult. To give some context, this gun weighs 9.3lb unscoped, with an overall length of 43½ inches, of which 16 inches is the barrel. With these dimensions, I expect that this gun will feel stable on aim; bracing the leading hand against a tree will be my practice when we get to the trial stage.

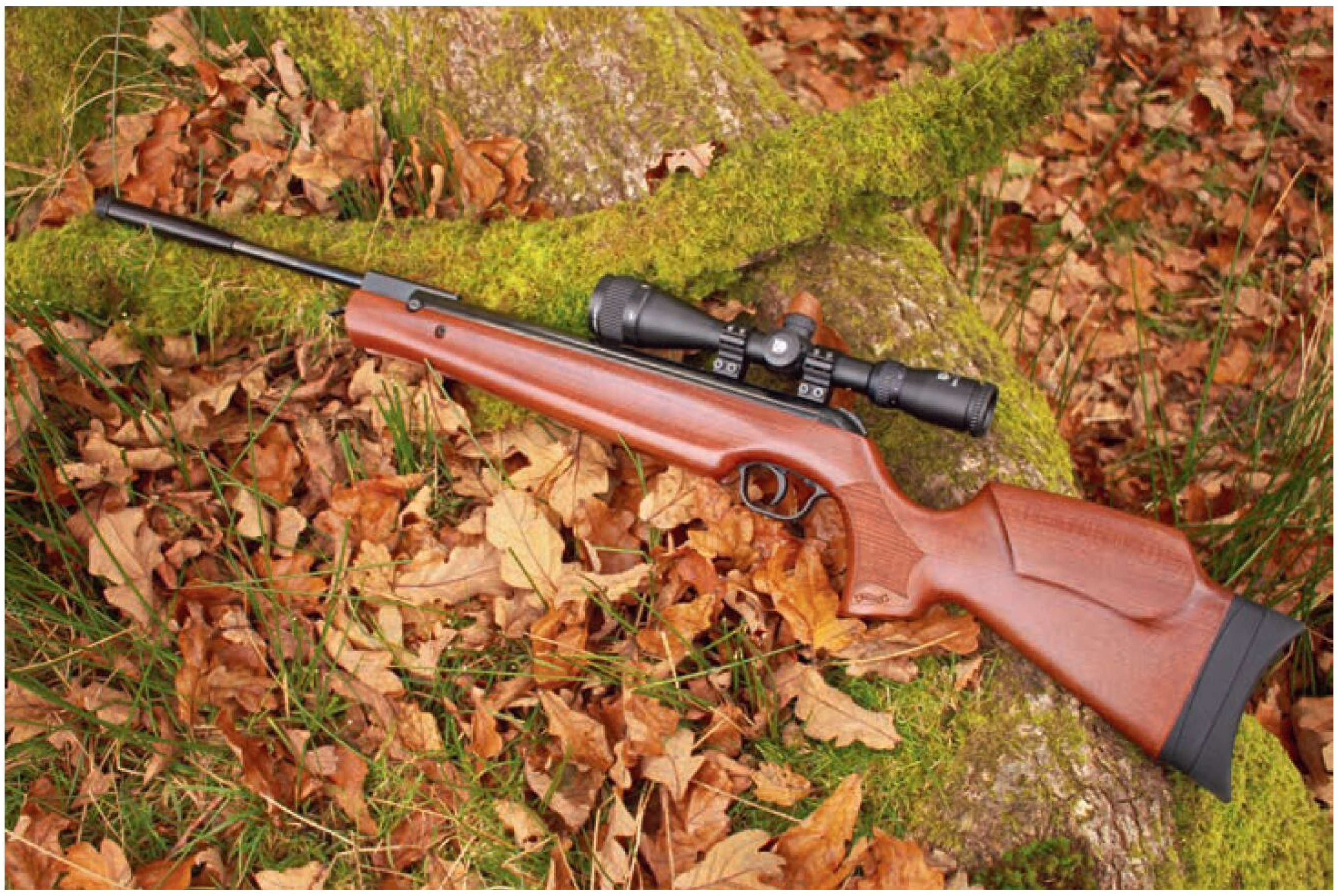
Before jumping ahead, it's probably best to get a feel for what features this gun has to offer — there is at least one which is a departure from the norm.

MUZZLE TO BUTT

At first glance, the muzzle end looks as though it's a combined weight and moderator adaptor. Remove the thread protector, which, for the record, was very tight, and a different picture emerges.

Rather than being an adaptor, the weight is simply a tube that has been slipped over the barrel, seemingly bonded in place, with the extra security of a grub screw. The 16mm diameter barrel is threaded ½in UNF at its end, which means that should you fit a moderator, it will be a direct-to-barrel fitment. This is always preferable, as it will help minimise the chance of misalignment causing inaccuracy due to pellet clipping. Given the length of this gun, I would be surprised if a moderator were added, but if you feel the need, this gun has the best option available.

As you would expect, the muzzle is accurately crowned with clean, crisp



The LGV is certainly a stylish rifle

Remove this end cap to reveal the threaded barrel

This thumb catch operates a rather effective breech lock

rifling, and Walther barrels have an enviable reputation for accuracy.

THERE'S A CATCH

The main criticism levelled at a break-barrel rifle is the potential for accuracy problems due to insecure breech lock-up. Alongside insecurity, there can be concerns over lateral play at the breech, with shots tending to string along in a horizontal pattern.

Neither of these issues will worry the potential LGV owner, as there is a substantial breech bolt to tighten to compensate for lateral play and a "lock" to securely hold the barrel in place.

A holdover from the original LGV, the under-barrel thumb-operated catch provides rock-solid closure to the breech, eliminating the risk of inconsistent lock-up. A similar arrangement can be seen on the Anschutz 335 as well.

In practice, the catch is easy to release by pressing lightly with the thumb and closes automatically when the barrel is returned home. It's very effective in function and, thankfully, easy to operate.

A breech bolt will ensure that lateral barrel play is a thing of the past

REMAINING ACTION

Moving backwards along the action, we then find the generously cut 11mm scope rails, which are followed by the downward curve of the back block.

With an outer diameter of 35mm, the cylinder houses a 25mm piston, differing from the 30mm one found on the Century. This smaller diameter will bring the gun more in line with UK power limits and should thus provide a more pleasant shot cycle than a gun detuned from higher power limits.

The top side of the back block houses the automatic safety catch,

Deep cut scope rails and arrestor holes will aid scope security

Automatic resettable slide safety is within thumb reach which is resettable. Positioned where it is, it's accessible and, thus, more likely to be used.

Directly linked to that safety catch is the XM trigger assembly, the higher-grade unit offered by Walther. With two stages and adjustability for weight and travel, the only obvious downside for me is the plastic trigger blade. During production, a metal blade option was available, though these now appear to be long gone.

Contemporary advertising described the LGV as having a "vibration reduction system" and "super silent technology"; without a look inside — don't worry, that's coming next month — it's difficult to determine exactly what this entails.

TALKING STOCK

Any prospective owners are likely to encounter synthetic or beech stocks, although there are a scant few — five in total — made from walnut. We know the location of one, which resides with our own Paddy Egan, presented to him by Umarex for his service to the company, principally through the Umarex Boys Club.

As a mere commoner, I have the beech stock, though it's actually a very nicely executed example of stock making.

The deep semi-schnabel forend extends to the end of the breech block, effectively covering it — a feature often seen on custom-made stocks. Devoid of checkering, the forend features a wide flute design, which is very tactile, providing a comfortable position for the thumb while the forend rests upon the leading hand. It's particularly nice to see that Walther has used hex-head screws to secure the stock; I find these a practical and more secure fixing.

Checkering resides on the grip, which is sharp enough to provide excellent traction. At the base of the grip, where one would usually expect to see the Minelli signature, we find the Walther name. This may indicate that the stock is made in-house, although I can't fully confirm this at the time of writing.

As this is a scope-only variant, Walther have thoughtfully designed a generously high cheekpiece, capable of supporting your cheek for medium or high scope mounts. A 3-9x40 scope in medium mounts was used for review purposes, and was comfortable in use.

The cheekpiece contours, a mixture of straight lines and curves, nod to the 1980s while remaining thoroughly modern, which pleased me no end.

All this thoughtful design terminates in an adjustable butt pad, which offers vertical adjustment. In my view, every adjustable butt pad should have a deep concave profile as it provides far better support; thankfully, this one doesn't disappoint. On removing the butt pad, I noticed the Minelli trademark, suggesting that at least the butt pad is sourced directly from these stock making maestros.

That concludes the visual assessment; now it's time to get outside and see just how well this LGV performs...

A gun this good shouldn't have a plastic trigger blade

STRAIGHT SHOOTER

First step for me is always power assessment, so out with the LMBR chronograph and .22 JSB RS pellets. Reassuringly, with unprepared pellets, an average muzzle energy of 11.68ft/lb was achieved with a 10fps spread over 10 shots. A very encouraging start indeed, I'm sure you'll agree.

With an inexpensive 3-9x40 scope already secured, I set up paper targets at 30m for the customary accuracy test. As I mentioned, I used a solid vertical rest for my leading arm, providing a stable palm on which to rest the forend. This stance, which I've come to call a simulated hunting stance, may not yield the absolute best results as a bench might, but I prefer real-world conditions wherever that is possible.

Those long flutes give a very comfortable thumb rest and are also very easy on the eye

Using this stance, it was remarkable how stable the gun was on aim; that extra weight really does iron out muscle twitches, enabling precise aiming. All this stability translated into performance that I've only been able to replicate with my benchmark spring gun: the wonderful AirArms TX200.

Repeatedly, I printed groups no larger than 12mm, which would likely be even smaller if the gun was fully supported.

SOUND OF SILENCE

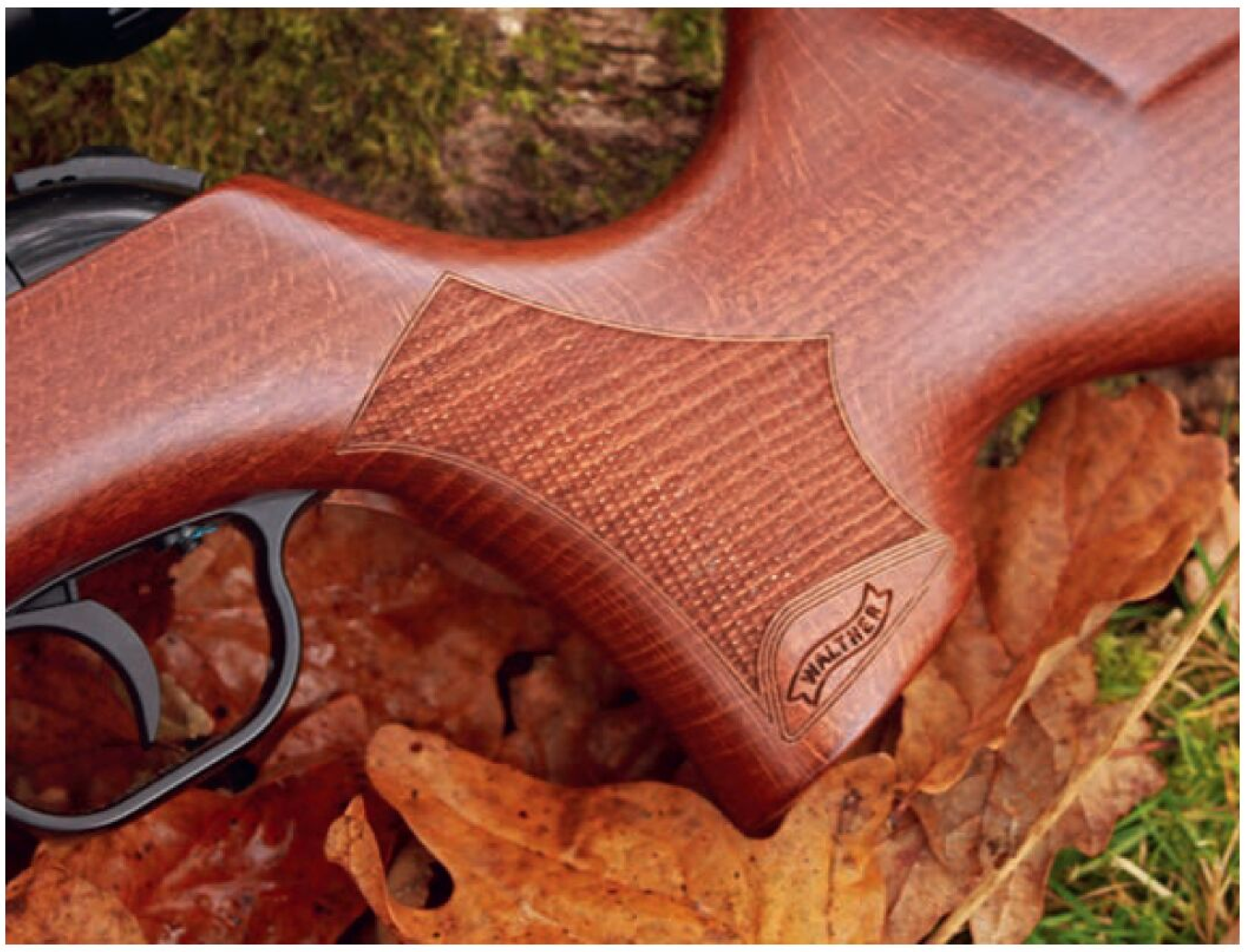
We've already mentioned the "Super Silent Technology" and "Vibration Reduction System", and now we can test these features.

Without any additional sound moderation, this gun is impressively quiet, with only a dull thud on discharge and very little felt recoil. There are no extra resonant noises, which can often occur in a spring gun with too much clearance between the spring and piston body. At this point, I'm not entirely sure how this has been achieved, although I suspect considerable attention has been given to the internal fit and finish of the components. Overall, the gun feels as though it has benefited from a tuner's expertise. To be presented with a gun achieving this level of refinement straight from the factory, without secondary intervention, is something to be celebrated.

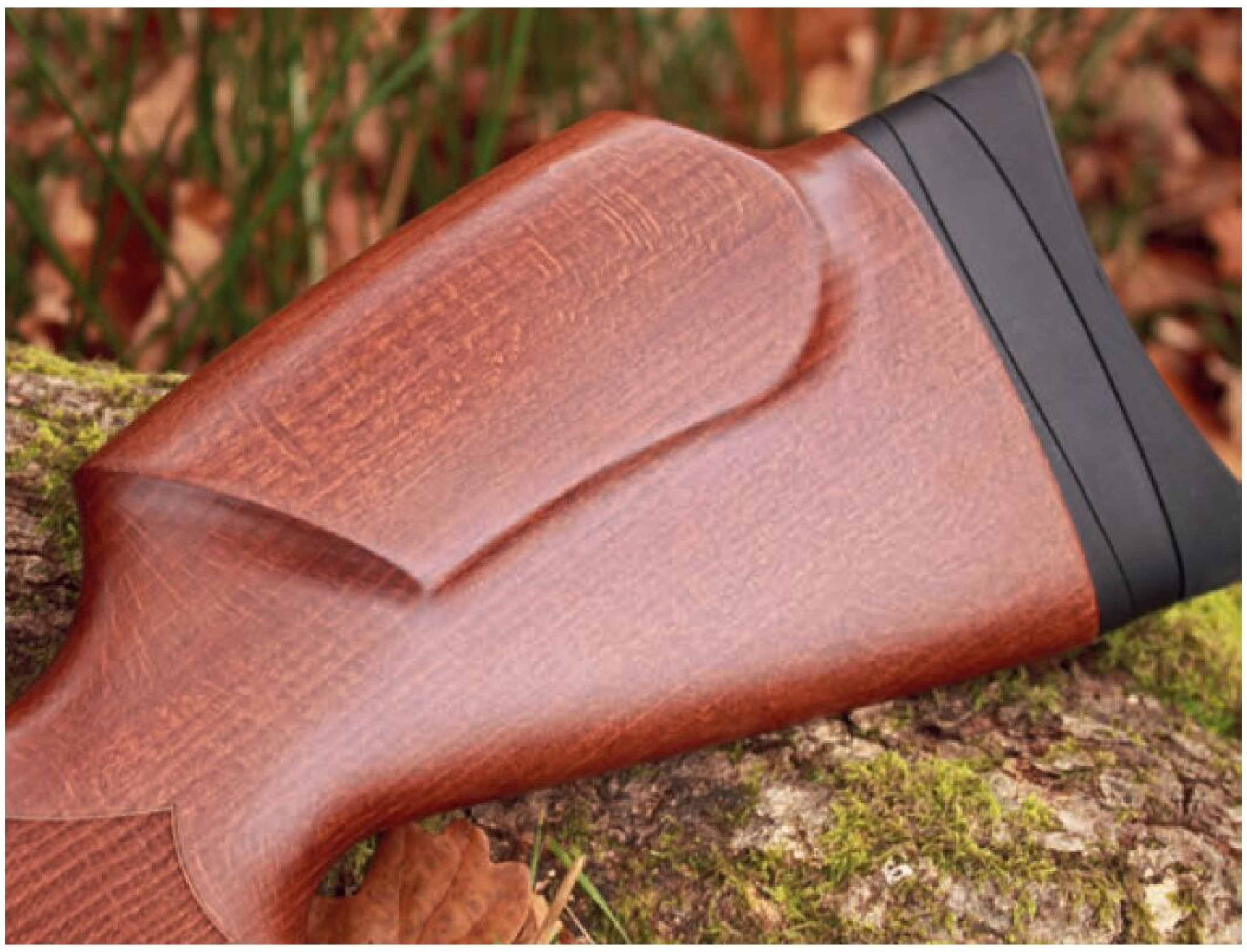
I do need to find something to criticise, so I'll pick on the trigger — I'm really not a fan of that plastic blade. As a release mechanism, it does an adequate job, though it lacks the finesse seen elsewhere on the gun. Although there doesn't seem to be a factory solution, I'm going to research this further, as I'm sure there'll be an aftermarket option to address it.

It's hard to imagine where there's room for improvement elsewhere, although I'm keen to strip the gun down if only to confirm my thoughts about the internal componentry.

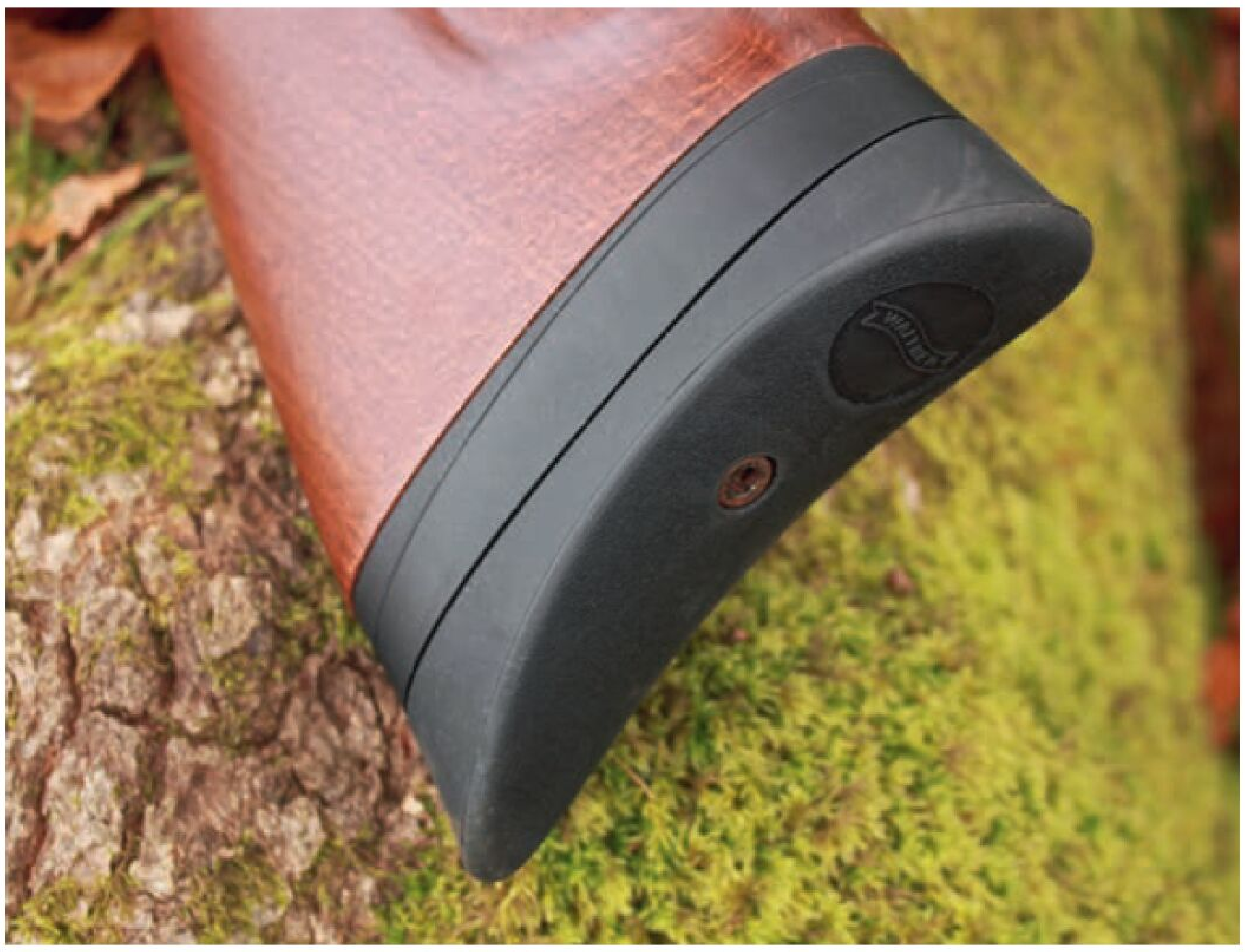
Until then, if you do happen to see a used LGV, my recommendation would be to snap it up. Only a finite number exists, and time will only make them more desirable. You will find one for around £350 on the used market. ■



Good sharp checkering enhances palm traction



The generous cheek piece is ideal for medium or high scope mounts



Butt pads are at their best when adjustable and deeply concave

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THE CROSMAN MARK I AND II PELLGUNS

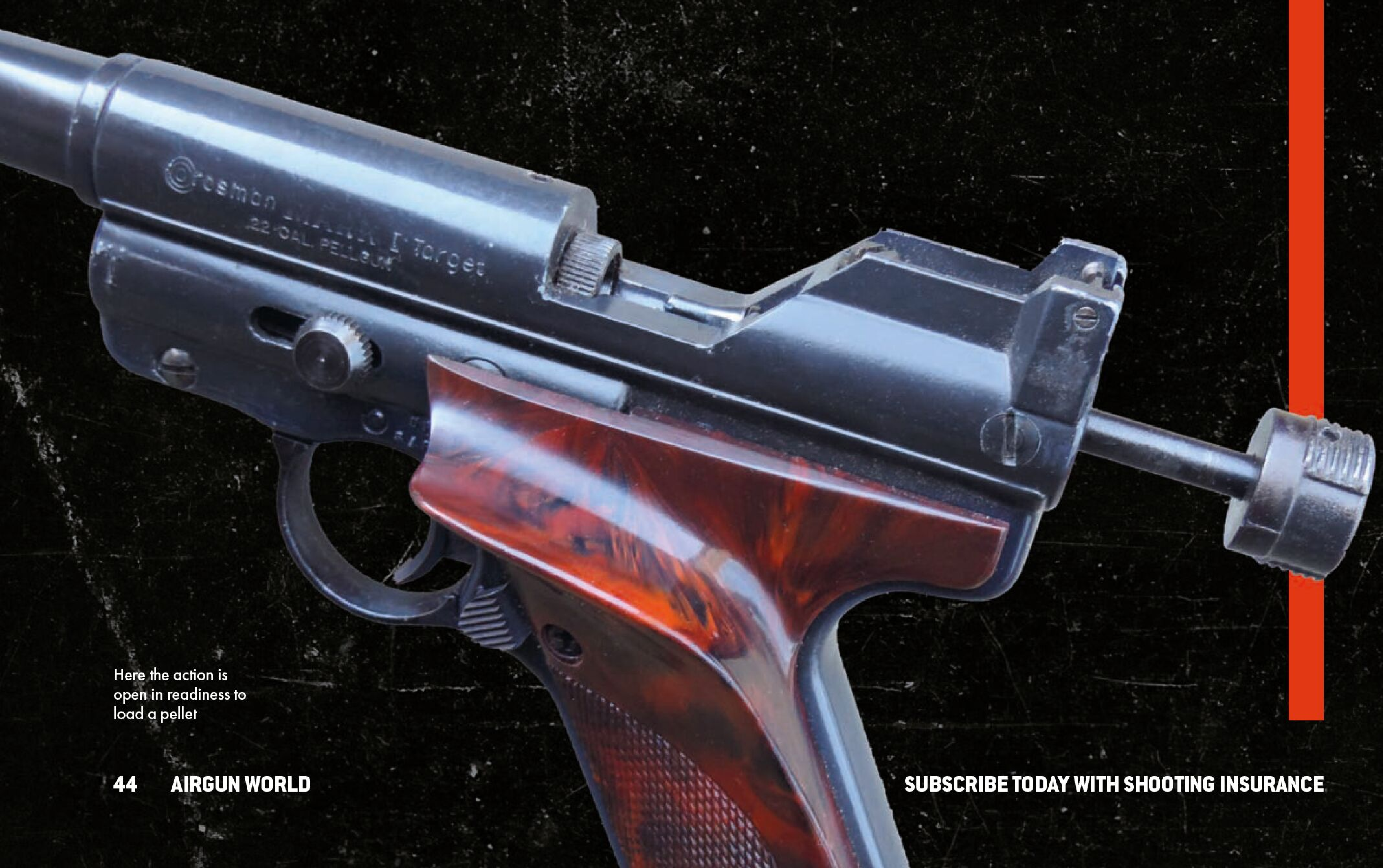
In the first of a short series of articles on the Crosman Mark I and Mark II pistol, John Milewski examines their relatively short but ultimately fascinating backstory

The Crosman Mark I and Mark II pistols, introduced in 1966, were in many ways an updated replacement for the classic 150 series. Rather than producing the same pistol in both .177 and .22 calibre, Crosman took the unusual step of assigning distinct names: the .22 variant became the Mark I, while the .177/BB model was designated the Mark II. The Mark I was produced until 1983, with the Mark II remaining in production until 1986.

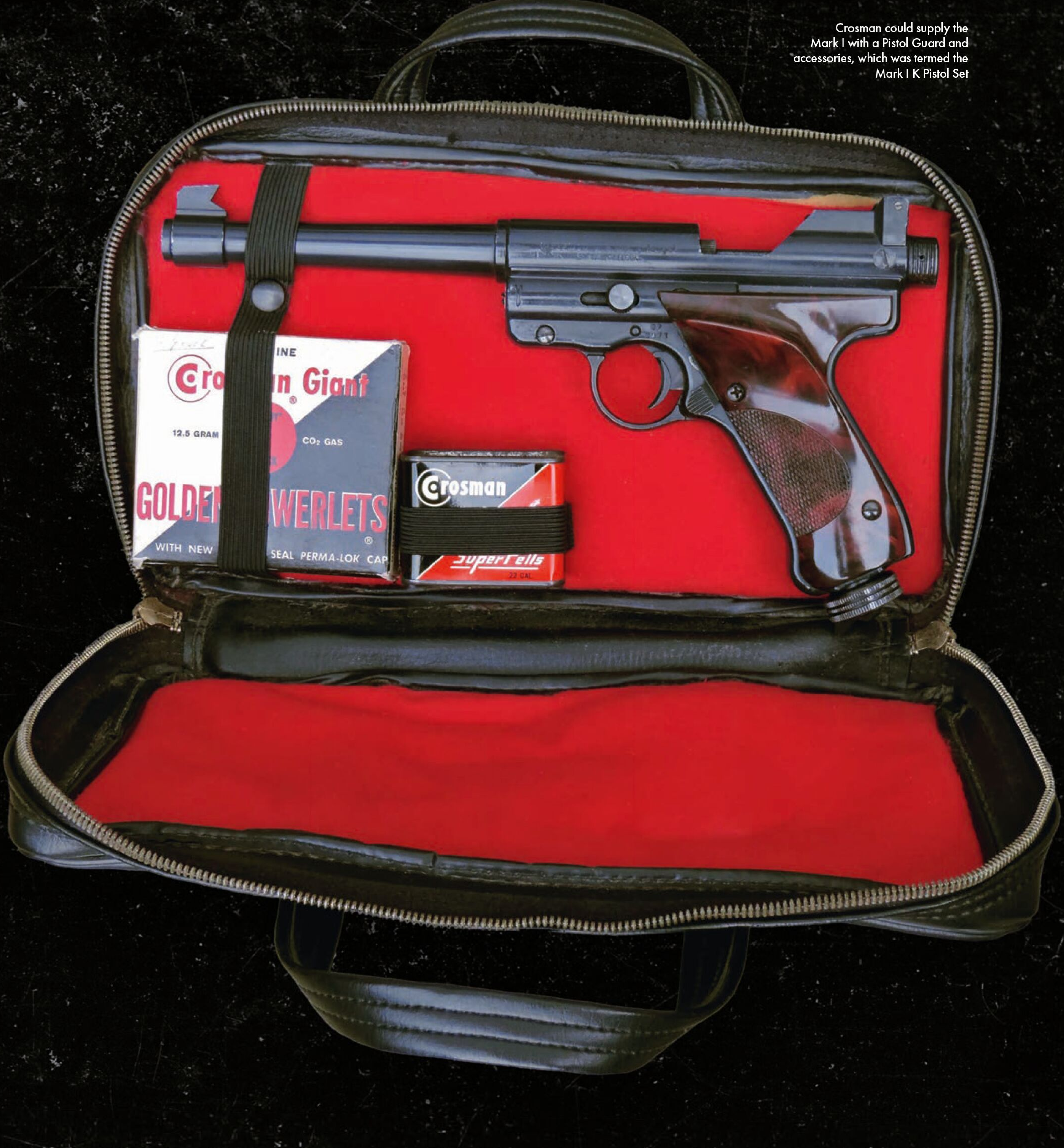
Externally, the only distinguishing feature between the two models was the marking on the barrel shroud, reading either "Crosman MARK I Target" or "Crosman MARK II Target" on the left side. Mark I pistols were fitted with mottled brown grips, while Mark II pistols had black grips as standard. Internally, the Mark II differed in having a magnetised, thinner bolt tip to hold BBs in place before firing them through a shorter, smooth-bore barrel of just over five inches, compared with the rifled .22 barrel of the Mark I, which measured over 7¾ inches. For simplicity, we'll refer to both models collectively as the "Crosman Mark I series".

A RUGER REPLICA

The true barrel of the Crosman Mark I is concealed within a tapering barrel shroud and secured by a muzzle nut. Collectors with a keen eye will notice its resemblance to the Ruger Mark I .22 rimfire semi-automatic pistol—a similarity that was intentional, though Crosman never licensed the design from Ruger during the 20-year lifespan of the Crosman Mark I. Interestingly, the Ruger itself was inspired not by the classic Luger, as some assume, but by the Japanese Nambu pistol from the Second World War era, making the Crosman Mark I a faithful homage.



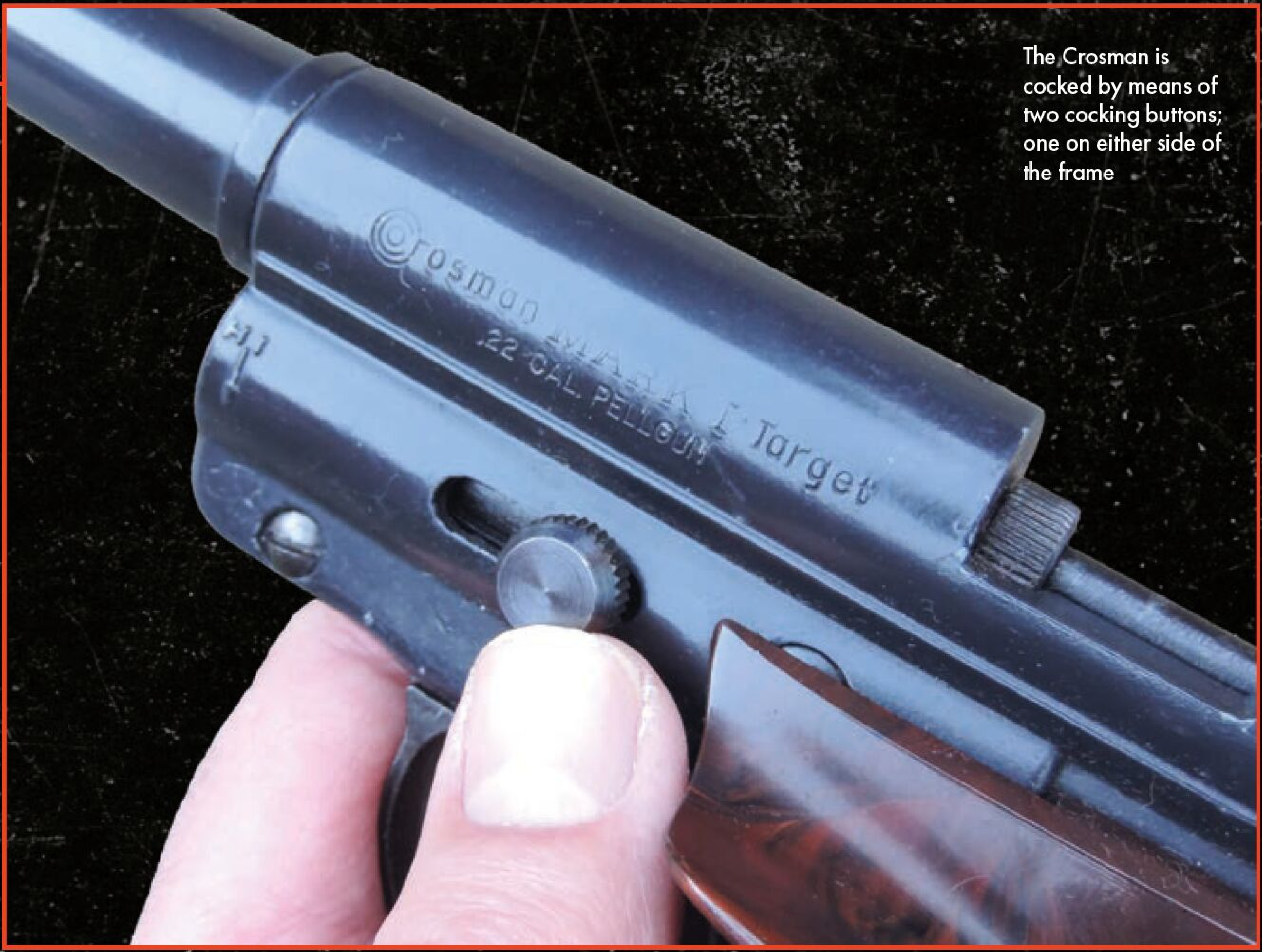
Here the action is open in readiness to load a pellet



Crosman could supply the Mark I with a Pistol Guard and accessories, which was termed the Mark I K Pistol Set

The Crosman Mark I featured a semi-target-style moulded grip with a prominent thumb rest for right-handed shooters. The trigger pull weight could be adjusted with a hex-headed screw located in front of the trigger blade, giving the "target" designation genuine merit. As with the 150 series, the power level was adjustable: pressing the dual cocking buttons on either side of the receiver forward by one click set low power, while two clicks engaged high power. This power adjustment altered the velocity by roughly 100fps, though it also changed the trigger pull weight. For consistency, it's best to choose one power setting and adjust the trigger accordingly.

Loading the single-shot pistol also required separate action. To load, the bolt knob at the rear of the pistol is rotated 90 degrees counter-clockwise and pulled back to expose the breech trough, whereafter a pellet can then be loaded. The bolt knob is then pushed forward and turned clockwise to lock the loading mechanism.



The Crosman is cocked by means of two cocking buttons; one on either side of the frame

EXCELLENT SIGHTS

The rear sight of the Mark I is adjustable both vertically and laterally, although the lateral adjustment is somewhat unconventional. Two small slotted screws on either side of the rear sight blade control this movement. To adjust, loosen the screw on the side towards which you wish to move the blade, then tighten the screw on the opposite side to secure it in place. Vertical adjustments are more straightforward, made with a slotted screw in the rear sight block. The sight blade has a well-defined U-shaped notch that pairs well with the front sight, which is an angled, partridge-style profile—a design originally popularised by a target shooter who lent the style its name.

PRESENTATION

When the Mark I was introduced in the mid-1960s, it was packaged in a rectangular red "target" box with a lift-off lid and a contoured red base for the pistol. The box featured illustrations promoting Crosman-branded Powerlets and Super Pells to encourage the use of Crosman products. One variant included an additional cut-out for a complimentary CO_2 Powerlet in a small box with Crosman's Canadian address, although later boxes omitted this recess.

Boxes for the Mark I and Mark II were similar, with each marked according to its model and calibre. The box for the .177 calibre Mark II also featured an illustration of a BB pack on it.

In the late 1960s to 1971, the packaging design shifted to a similar-sized box with a hinged lid, replacing the red target graphic with an illustration of a Mark I or Mark II resting on an open pistol guard case. By 1974, Crosman made further updates, including substituting a piercing button for the earlier lever at the base of the grip. Box graphics also evolved slightly, with text in blue rather than the original white.

Around this time, Crosman also replaced the cardboard base with a Styrofoam insert that had a moulded slot for the pistol. This change in packaging style followed the 1971 acquisition of Crosman by Coleman, whose branding appeared on Crosman products from this period. For instance, a Crosman pistol boxed in 1981 featured the Styrofoam base.

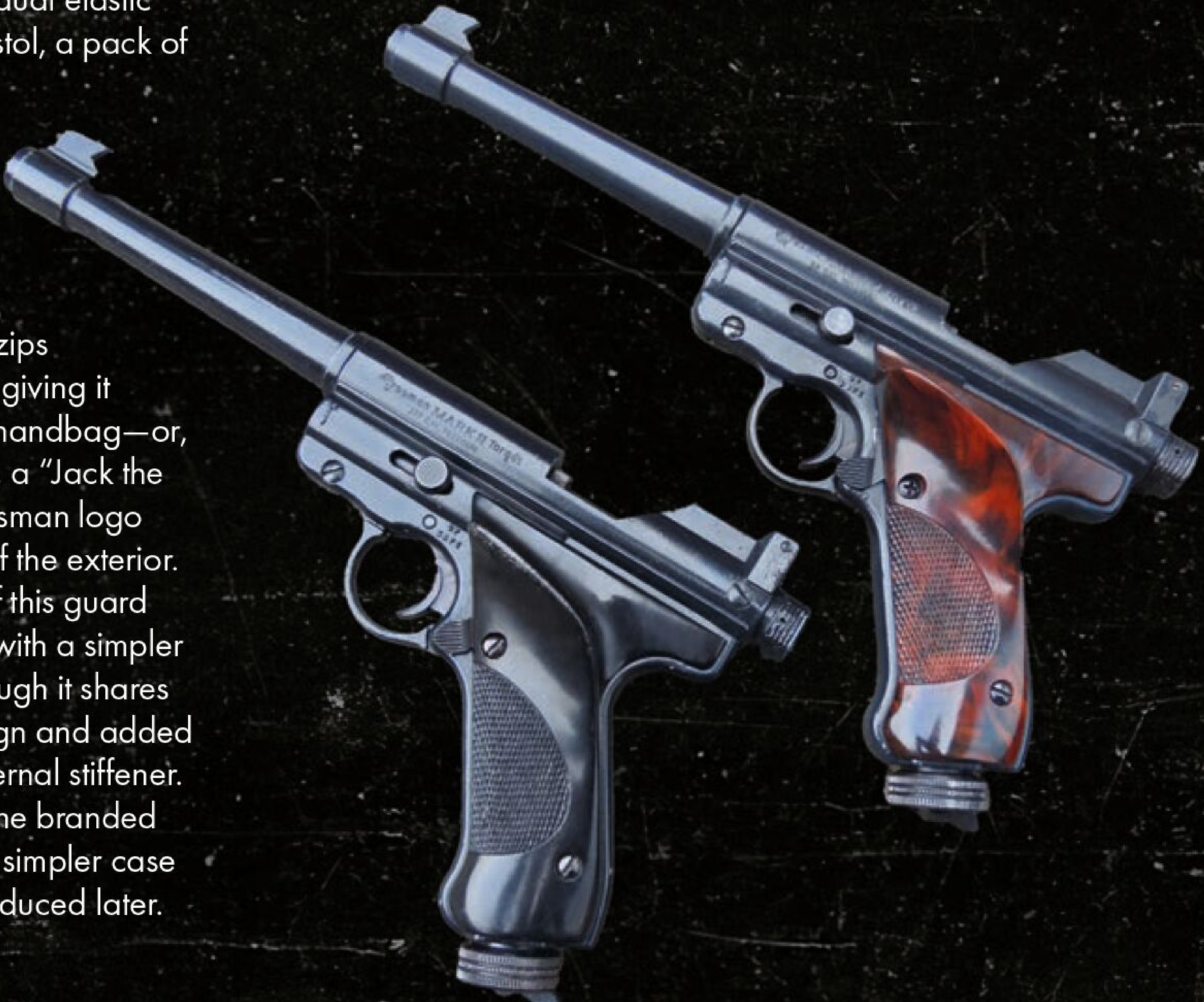
THE "HANDBAG" PISTOL GUARD CASE

In 1967, Crosman introduced a carrying case called the Crosman Pistol Guard, which was available as an optional accessory. The Mark I could also be purchased as the "Mark I K" pistol set, which included the Pistol Guard case. This black or brown, leather-look case had a red interior and individual elastic loops to secure the pistol, a pack of five Powerlets, and a tin of 250 .22 Crosman Super Pells. The case was fitted with a stiffened base for extra protection, two zips and two top handles, giving it the appearance of a handbag—or, as my sister observed, a "Jack the Ripper" bag! The Crosman logo adorned the top left of the exterior.

A plainer version of this guard without the logo and with a simpler zip is also known, though it shares the same interior design and added durability from the internal stiffener. Crosman advertised the branded guard in 1967, so this simpler case might have been introduced later.

A couple of other variations exist, including unbranded brown cases with either a light brown or gold lining. These cases have no interior loops, and Crosman specialist Leonard Joe believes the differences stem from Crosman sourcing cases from different manufacturers over the years.

In the next part, we'll examine variations of the Mark I series in more detail and take one to the range. How does a 50-year-old CO_2 pistol compare to modern-day offerings? We'll find out... ■



The Crosman Mark I and Mark II were unlicensed replicas of the Ruger Mark I .22 firearm, which was in turn based on the Japanese Nambu

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ENTRY LEVEL EXCELLENCE

Mark Camoccio examines the Gamo Riser and discovers a competitively priced PCP air rifle that is comfortable in the shoulder, packed with many thoughtful features and an ideal piece of kit for newcomers

The PCP air rifle is ideal for newcomers and those watching the pennies

Gamo's recent launch of the Arrow model marked a milestone as it was the first PCP air rifle it manufactured in-house. On test here is the Gamo Riser, which utilises a similar action but with a sleek sporter-style hardwood stock rather than a synthetic one.

EASY HANDLING

At 6.2lbs, the Riser is lightweight and easy to handle. Extensive use of synthetic components helps keep the weight low, despite the Riser's full-size proportions. Gamo markets the Riser as its new flagship air rifle, and while the ultra-light hybrid design is impressive, the linear loading system and Whisper Fusion sound suppressor are key elements well worth exploring.

SLEEK SPORTER

The Riser's hardwood stock is a defining feature, and though this model matches the Gamo Arrow in weight, it is slightly shorter. It features a raised cheek piece designed primarily for right-handed shooters, but its relatively neutral shape makes it effectively ambidextrous.

The pistol grip resembles a shotgun grip and is functional. The distinctive forend shape includes a hollowed section just past the trigger, providing access to the recessed inlet valve. Both the grip and forend have shallow, laser-cut stippling for added grip.

ACTION OVERVIEW

The Riser's steel cylinder is largely concealed within the stock, creating a compact profile. A manometer at the front of the cylinder shows pressure in three coloured segments: yellow (refill needed), green (operating range), and red (maximum safe pressure).

Apart from the cylinder, most components are synthetic, including the shroud and breech block, which are a single moulding, with a thin steel barrel visible at the breech. While a few internal components are metal for strength, the focus on weight reduction is evident.

The rifle includes fibre optic open sights, with a hooded red front element and a fully adjustable rear sight. Adjustment is managed by twin finger wheels, which, despite lacking markings, provide adequate precision. The sight picture is clear, offering a viable alternative to fitting a scope. The synthetic dovetail rails held up well during testing.

FILLING THE RISER

Gamo's extensive use of plastic continues with the 10-shot magazine, which is colour-coded by calibre and easy to load without pre-tensioning. Each pellet drops in head-first, with the drum rotated anti-clockwise.

Charging the Riser is straightforward enough thanks to the Foster valve, though the filling adaptor was missing from the test model. Most users will likely have a compatible fitting on hand, and the valve even includes a micron filter to keep out dirt. Annoyingly, however, Gamo does not include a valve cover — an omission that is easy to remedy. The recommended fill pressure is 230 bar.

CAT TRIGGER

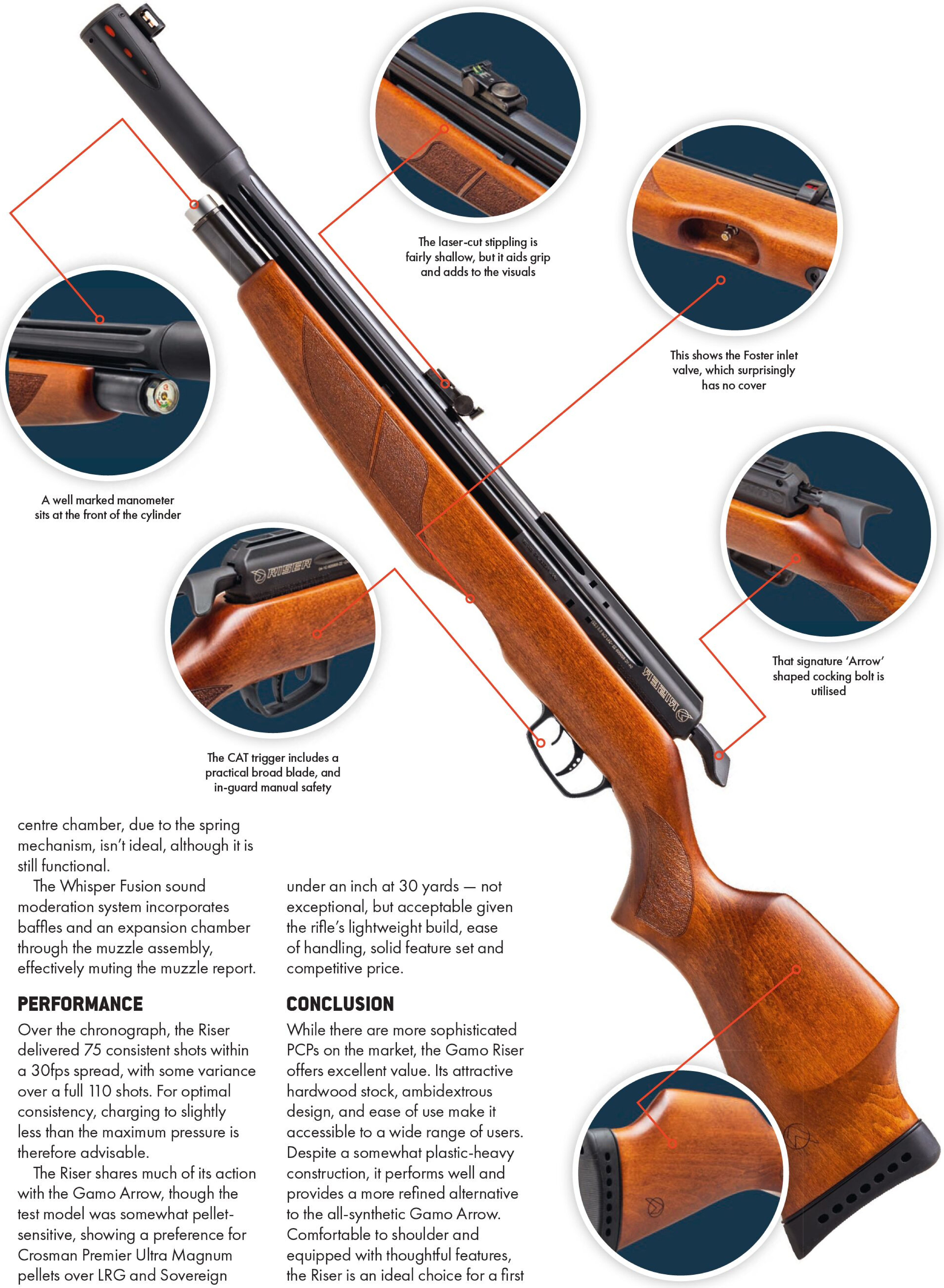
The Riser uses Gamo's CAT (Custom Action Trigger) mechanism, which has a broad blade and is adjustable for first and second stage release and travel. The trigger on the test model was set with a light first stage and a smooth release, but adjustments are available. A manual safety catch is also included.

HANDLING AND OPERATION

To cock the rifle, push down to release the arrow-shaped bolt handle, pull it back fully to cock the action and set the trigger, then insert the magazine, pushing the bolt forward and locking it in place. The synthetic bolt has some flex but is functional. Smooth feeding relies on keeping pellets flush in the magazine. The magazine's off-

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

MODEL: Gamo Riser
MANUFACTURER: Gamo Outdoor, Spain
TYPE: Multi-shot PCP Sporter
CALIBRE:177 on test, .22 also available
WEIGHT: 6.2lbs
LENGTH: 39½in
BARREL: 14½ in
STOCK: Ambidextrous hardwood sporter configuration
TRIGGER: 2-stage adjustable CAT unit
MAGAZINE: 10 shot in both calibres
POWER SOURCE: Pump/air bottle
FILL PRESSURE: 230 bar recommended max
SHOT COUNT: 110 on test
VELOCITY: (using Crosman Premier Ultra Magnum pellets)
Over 75 shot band / full 110 shots
High 716fps / High 716fps
Low 686fps / Low 656fps
Ave 700fps / Ave 690fps
Total Spread 30fps / Total spread 60fps
ENERGY: 11.4ft/lbs ave / 11.1ft/lbs ave
RRP: £450 guide price as tested, including 10-shot magazine and instruction manual
CONTACT: edgarbrothers.com



The laser-cut stippling is fairly shallow, but it aids grip and adds to the visuals

This shows the Foster inlet valve, which surprisingly has no cover

A well marked manometer sits at the front of the cylinder

That signature 'Arrow' shaped cocking bolt is utilised

The CAT trigger includes a practical broad blade, and in-guard manual safety

Branding at the butt end

centre chamber, due to the spring mechanism, isn't ideal, although it is still functional.

The Whisper Fusion sound moderation system incorporates baffles and an expansion chamber through the muzzle assembly, effectively muting the muzzle report.

PERFORMANCE

Over the chronograph, the Riser delivered 75 consistent shots within a 30fps spread, with some variance over a full 110 shots. For optimal consistency, charging to slightly less than the maximum pressure is therefore advisable.

The Riser shares much of its action with the Gamo Arrow, though the test model was somewhat pellet-sensitive, showing a preference for Crosman Premier Ultra Magnum pellets over LRG and Sovereign pellets. Groupings were just under an inch at 30 yards — not exceptional, but acceptable given the rifle's lightweight build, ease of handling, solid feature set and competitive price.

CONCLUSION

While there are more sophisticated PCPs on the market, the Gamo Riser offers excellent value. Its attractive hardwood stock, ambidextrous design, and ease of use make it accessible to a wide range of users. Despite a somewhat plastic-heavy construction, it performs well and provides a more refined alternative to the all-synthetic Gamo Arrow. Comfortable to shoulder and equipped with thoughtful features, the Riser is an ideal choice for a first PCP or budget-friendly option. ■

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MEMORIES, MYTHS AND MAGIC

Terry Doe offers his personal take on the upsurge in airgun technology

Rarely a month passes without someone asking me if I think, in terms of technology, that airgunning has gone too far. Without exception, those who ask me this question believe that the answer is yes. Furthermore, most of them are convinced that I'll be grieving right alongside them in their mourning the loss of "the good old days". As it turns out, though, they couldn't be more wrong.

I've been a fanatically dedicated airgun shooter for well over 50 years, and I'm here to tell you that, as far as the hardware we use is concerned, the good old days are right here, right now. I'll go further; again, when it comes to technology, there has never been a better time to be an airgunner. Here's why...

First, pretty much every stage of airgun development is still available to us today. From basic break-barrel springers, through standard pre-charged pneumatic sporters, all the way to hyper-tweaked, ravingly expensive, multi-shot superguns that cost the same as your first car — you can buy and use modern examples of them all.

Most of these guns will be better than the air rifles of yesteryear, mainly because production technology has also moved on, and comparatively, genuine high performance is cheaper now than it ever was. The fact is, modern airgunners can conduct themselves, and their sport, on any level they choose. This surely has to be a good thing, no? Yes.

Here's a real-world example for you to consider. When I finish writing this article, I'm going to put on some of the best hunting clothing I've ever worn, pull on my warm, comfortable shooting boots, and drive to a farm to shoot rabbits. I'll be using a thermal spotter, a match-accurate, multi-shot rifle, and a scope that switches modes between night vision, thermal and digital, all of it backed by an on-board rangefinder and infra-red illuminator. Not only that, the scope's various modes can be combined, picture-in-picture, in whatever pairing you think will serve you best in the field.

Back in the good old days, whilst freezing in army surplus store clobber, clumping about in decidedly non-thermal wellies, and using a single-shot springer, while my hunting buddy used a homemade lamp, cobbled together from a motorcycle headlight and a leaky, lead-acid battery, I couldn't have dreamed of using today's gear.

There's a world of hardware evolution between those two extremes, and having lived through both, I know beyond a shadow of a doubt, that these days of higher and higher technicality, are the very finest of times. Choose it and use it if you want to, or ignore it completely and stick to the more basic stuff. The most important thing is, thanks to the development of our sport, and the incredible array of hardware that services it — we can enjoy this fantastic pastime at any level we choose. Just get out there, everyone — because the good old days are waiting for you. ■

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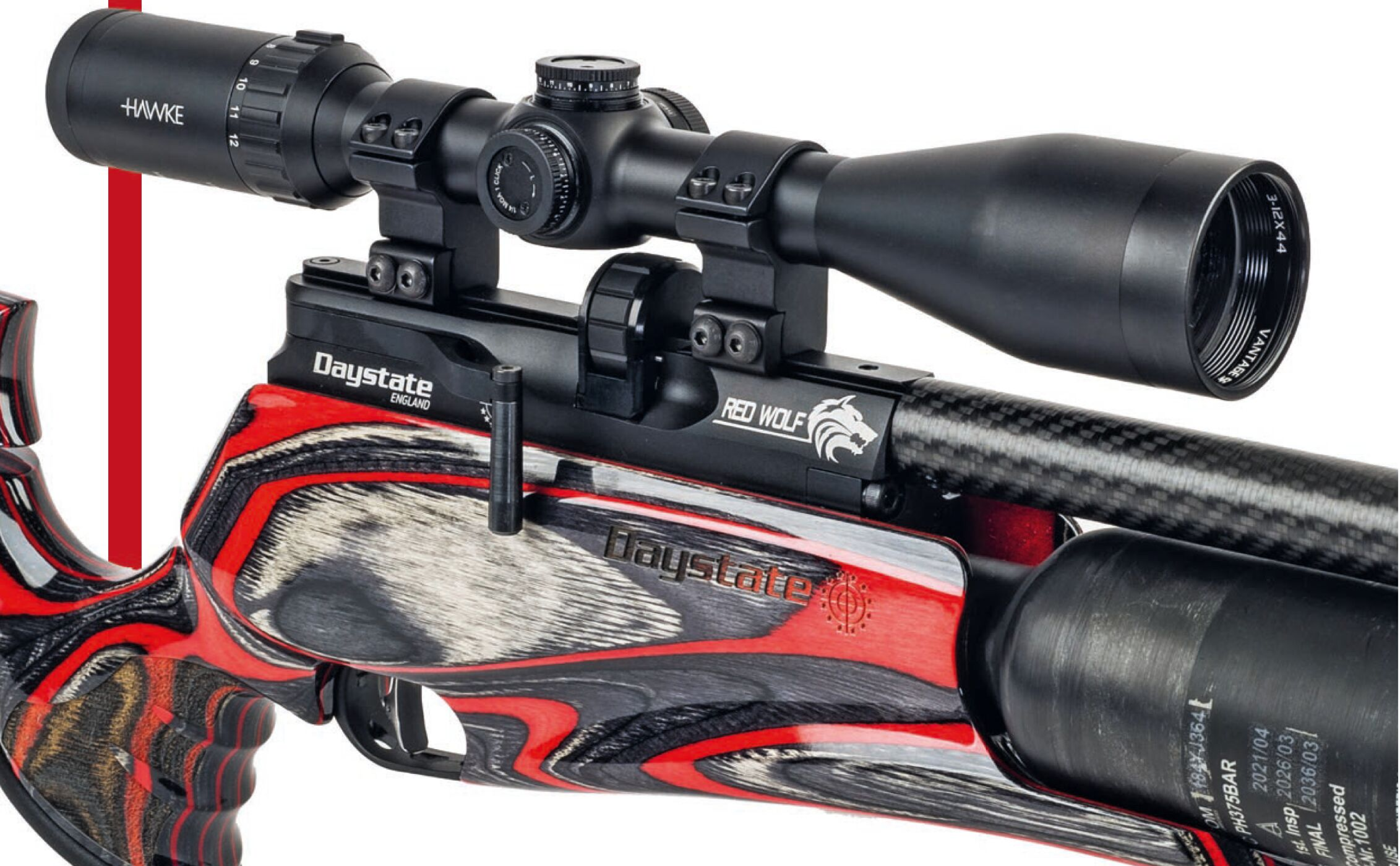
HAWKE VANTAGE 3-12x44 SF

Nigel Allen examines a scope featuring Hawke's half mil-dot reticle that is a practical performer and which punches well above its modest price tag



TECH SPECS

MODEL: Hawke Vantage 3-12x44 SF

MAGNIFICATION: 3x to 12x zoom (stepless)

OBJECTIVE: 44mm diameter

LENSES: 11 layer multi-coated

RETICLE: Half mil-dot (non-illuminable), second focal plane

PARALLAX: Sidewheel, 10 yards — infinity

FOCUS: Quick focus eyepiece

TURRETS: Low profile, resettable. Finger adjustable with screw caps

CLICK ADJUSTMENT: 1/4MOA (100MOA total — elevation and windage)

FIELD OF VIEW: (3x/12x) 10.2/2.6m @100m

BODY TUBE: 25.4mm (1in), monocoque

MOUNTS: Not included

LENGTH: 337mm

WEIGHT: 491g

INCLUDED ACCESSORIES: Elasticated clear lens caps, lens cloth, user manuals

RRP: £199

WEBSITE: hawkeoptics.com

Hawke's Vantage must be one of the most comprehensive scope ranges on the planet — its 2024 catalogue lists 65 in total. The model I've been testing is one of the three 'SF', or side focus, 25.4mm body tube offerings which sport Hawke's half mil-dot reticle.

At £199, the 3-12x44 SF is the most affordable. Its bigger SF siblings — the 4-16x44 and a 6-24x44 — come in at £209 and £219 respectively, so I'd consider this Vantage configuration very affordable in today's market. However, it would be wrong to say it's built down to a price. If my test sample is anything to go by, Hawke's high standards prevail from ocular to objective.

I can't see anywhere that Hawke may have cut corners, either on the scope itself or, even, what comes in its box. As well as a couple of very comprehensive, printed user guides, there's also an impressively large and super-soft lens cloth to keep the 11-layer, fully multi-coated lenses in ship-shape condition.

It also comes with see-through, elasticated lens covers. When I say "see-through", I mean it. These untinted lens protectors are so good you can, actually, shoot with them in place. That may be useful in the field if you're forced into taking a snapshot with no time at all to remove them.

Mounts are not included, though. As Hawke didn't supply me with any, I used two-piece High BluePrint ringmounts to marry the test scope to a Daystate Red Wolf.

Hawke claims its Vantage scopes are suitable for virtually any firearm, so rigging it to a recoilless PCP isn't going to test that claim. However, I still gave its gimbal system a terse workout by fully rotating the elevation and windage turrets dozens of times in my "walking the zero" tests.

The Vantage's turrets are rated for 1/4MOA clicks and, amazingly, the 3-12x44 SF has a 100MOA spin range. That's no fewer than 400 clicks – or more than six turret rotations. But no matter how far to the extremes I repeatedly spun them, the Vantage always returned to my original point of impact (POI). From that, I must conclude this scope will also hold firm on recoiling airguns.

One click of the turrets moves the POI ¼in at 100 yards. In metric, that translates to 1.5mm of adjustment at 25m, so I never had any issues in obtaining an extremely precise zero.

The turrets' numbered verniers are easily resettable to '0' (see

HAWKE
9
10
11
12
Quick-focus eyepiece

10 YDS
15
20
422B00601
NITROGEN
HAWKE
CHARGED
Monocoque design

∞
300
7
8
9
10
11
12
0.177
RED WOLF
This Vantage's low-profile turrets are very field practical

> ***“ The turrets’ low-profile layout is exactly what I want on a field combination ”***

3-12X44
VANTAGE SF
3-12X44
VANTA

11-layer, fully multi-coated lenses ensure good light transmission through the objective

panel *Resetting the Turrets to 0*). What I particularly liked was their low-profile layout, even with their protective caps screwed on. Such a design is exactly what I want on a field combination. Larger, exposed target turrets could be inadvertently knocked off their setting.

A word of warning. If you constantly dial-in your zero, be mindful of which way you’ve rotated the turret. The lack of any ladder vernier makes it too easy to return to the “0” mark from the wrong direction and be a full rotation out.

The good news, however, is that you don’t really need to turn the turrets to a new setting to shoot closer or beyond your primary zero distance. That’s because Hawke’s half mil-dot reticle (see panel *Half mil-dot reticle*) gives you a plethora of reference points for hold-over, hold-under and windage.

In practice, I was able to get the reticle pin sharp with the Vantage’s quick-focus eyepiece, which also sports a rubber rim to protect you from high-recoil rifles. However, I did find the crosshair a little too busy for my personal taste. It’s certainly bold enough to pick out against even the

HAWKE
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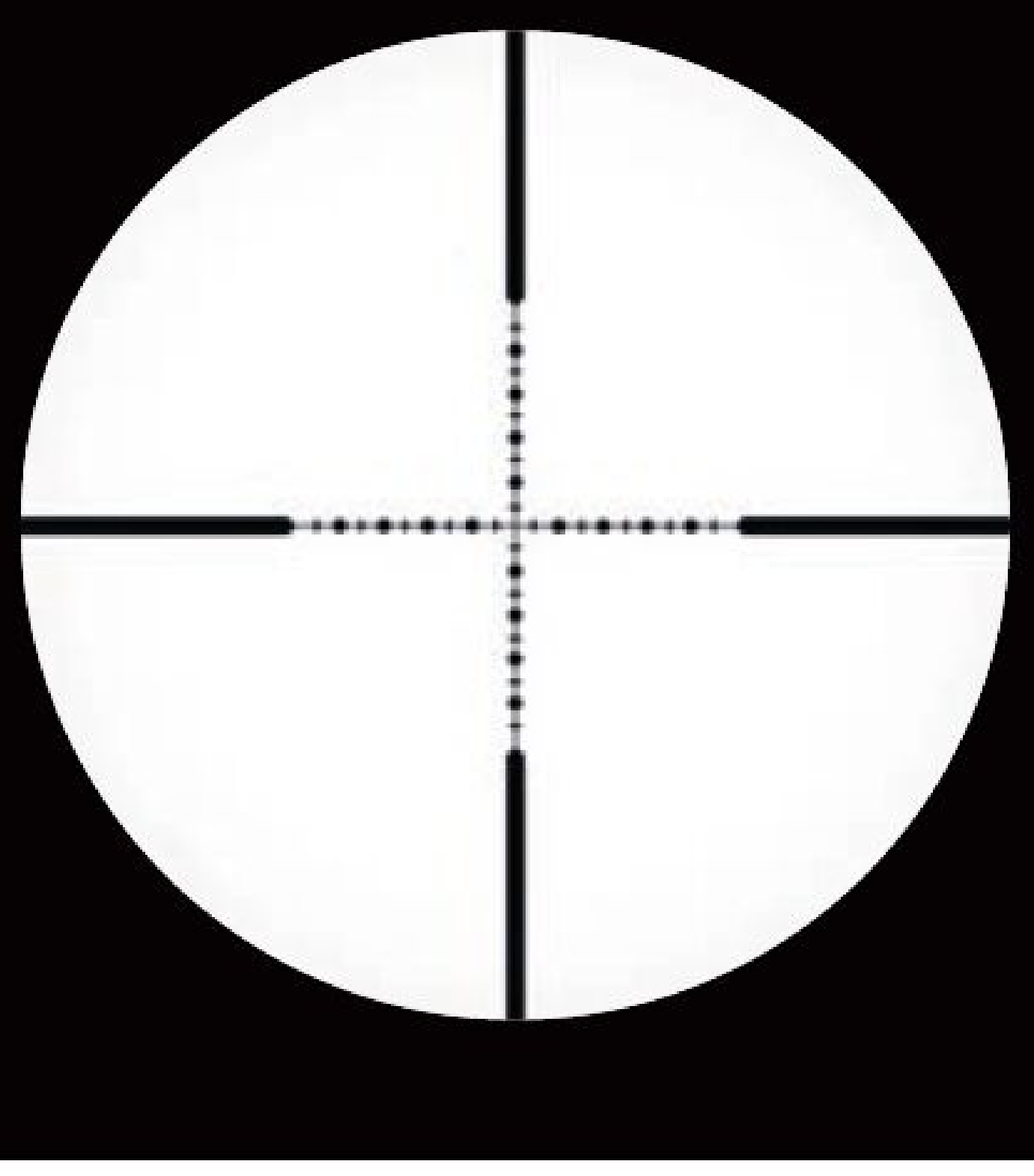
HALF MIL-DOT RETICLE

Hawke’s half mil-dot crosshair features thick outer posts with a central crosswire that sports dots and dashes. Radiating from the centre, each crosswire has four dots, with dashes placed equidistantly between.

Dots are spaced at one milliradian — 1 mil — intervals (at 10x power), with dashes equating to half-mil spacings. This provides a multitude of reference points for elevation and windage allowances.

On SFP scopes like the Vantage, multi-stadia reticles can also be used to “bracket” the target to assist in range-finding (see panel *Second Focal Plane Reticle*).



HAWKE
RED WOLF
RW 4472
Daystate ENGLAND
Daystate

> **“ Regardless of its magnification setting, my scope always held its zero ”**

busiest of backgrounds. But when holding over on very distant targets, I sometimes got distracted from my aim by having to “count” my way down all those dots and dashes.

Yet the HMD reticle comes into its own for range-finding. Because it’s situated in the second focal plane on this model, you can use it for “bracketing” (see panel *Second Focal Plane Reticle*). I daresay you could also use the sidewheel focus parallax system of the 6-24x SF model (and possibly even the 4-16x) to find range. However, this model’s top mag of 12x just isn’t enough to fine-tune focus accurately, making it tricky to establish exact distance. It’s a pity, because the range gaps in its parallax sidewheel are large, especially at airgun distances.

Nonetheless, I always think range-finding with parallax is an added bonus on a scope. Its primary purpose is, of course, to eliminate parallax error — the apparent shift of the crosshair through inconsistent eye position. In the case of the Vantage, the parallax adjustment worked perfectly, particularly at close ranges, where parallax error is most prevalent.

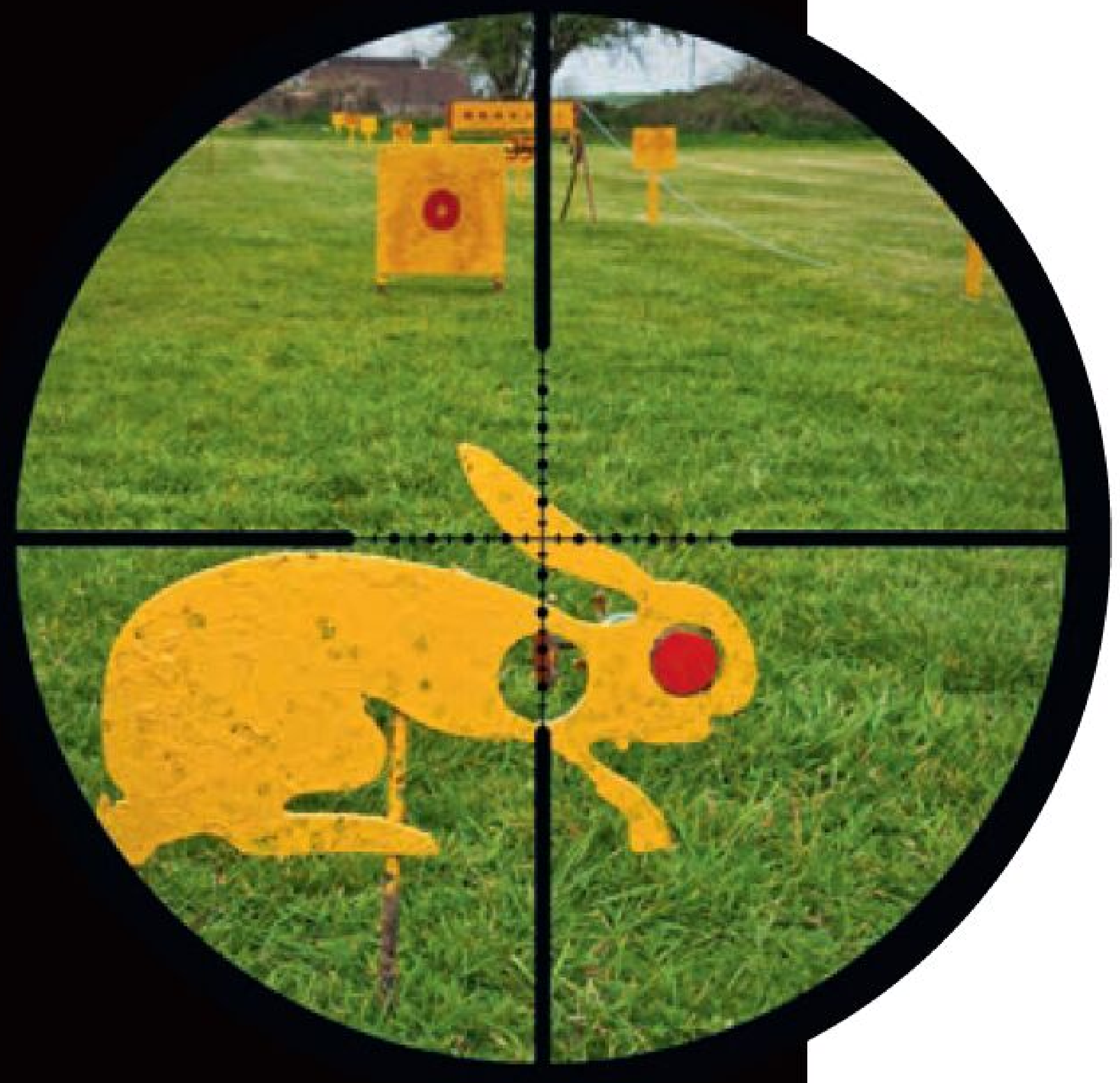
What also worked a treat was the zoom ring. Assisted by a raised finger ramp, it turns very smoothly, regardless of the ambient temperature. Rings often stiffen up in cold conditions, but my Hawke’s operated with ease even after being in the fridge for 30 minutes.

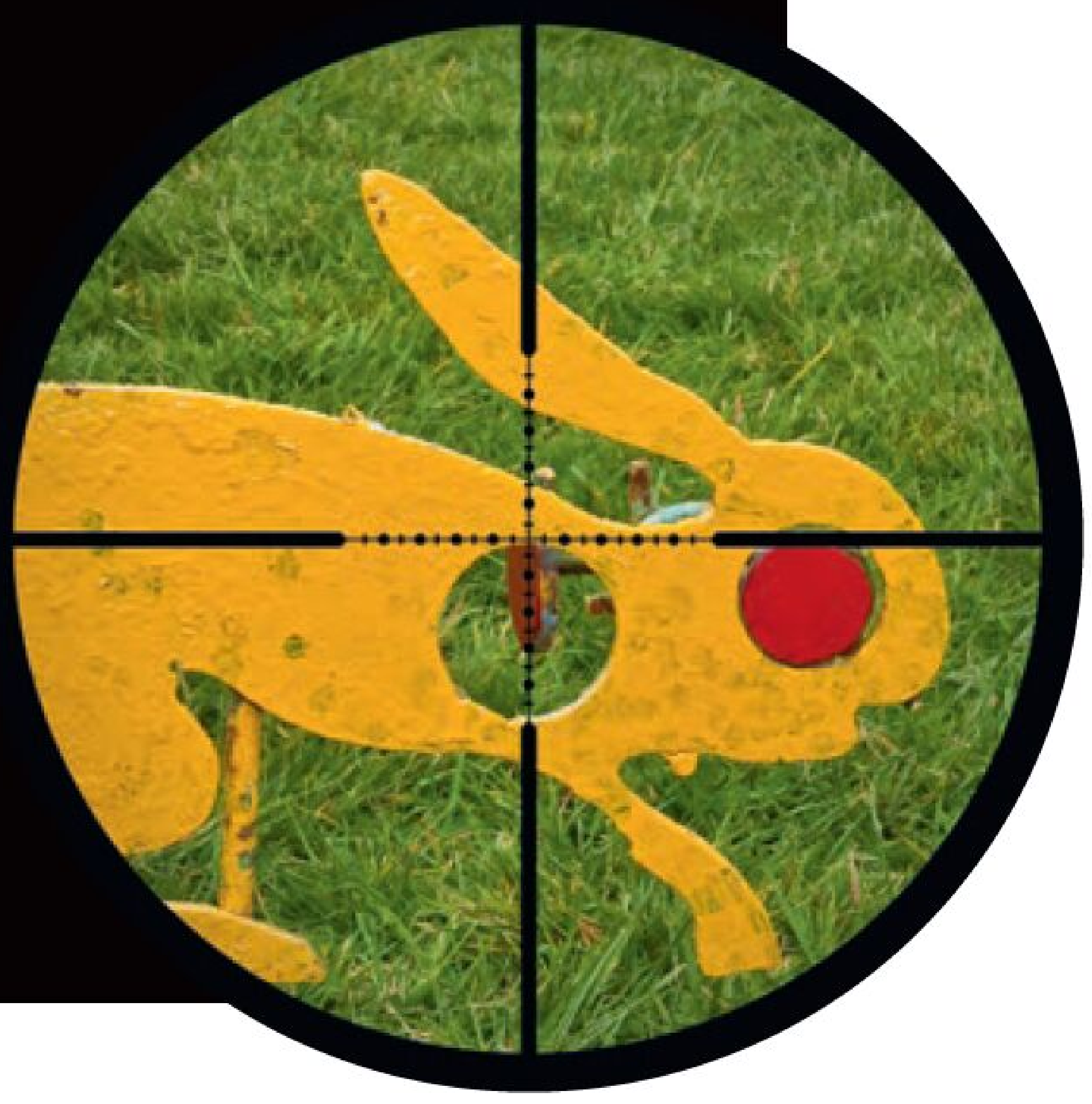
Also, regardless of its magnification setting, my scope always held zero. On many SFP scopes, the zero can shift as you cycle through the powers. No such problems with this Hawke: if I zeroed it on 12x power, its

SECOND FOCAL PLANE RETICLE

Hawke’s half mil-dot reticle is located in the second focal plane (SFP) on the Vantage SF vari-power models. So the relationship between the crosshair and the target changes as you zoom through the magnification settings. In practice, the size of the crosshair remains constant, while the size of the sight picture changes.

This helps with range-finding using the “bracketing” system, where you calculate the distance of your target by turning the scope’s zoom ring until the dots and dashes span it. While it takes a little preliminary work to prepare a field reference chart, it’s a system that many long-range shooters swear by. Once you’re familiar with it, it’s surprisingly quick and accurate.





OPTICAL PERFORMANCE

CLARITY AT...	CENTRE		EDGE	
3X	9	8	9	7
6X	9	8	9	7
12X	10	8	8	7

Optical performance is carried out at 25m in typical daylight conditions, viewing newspaper print at low, mid and high magnifications. Scores are rated on absolute results. The black graphics indicate the reviewer's expectations, based on retail price and brand. Expectation levels will be greater for higher priced scopes from well-known brands, and lower for cheaper scopes from less well-known brands.

> ***"Considering its price tag, I was taken aback by its optical performance"***

HAWKE
VISION ACCOMPLISHED
www.hawkeoptics.com
VANTAGE SF
3
4
5
6
HAWKE

POI remained dead centre through its entire magnification range. No doubt this accuracy is attributable to the Vantage's High Torque Zoom Ring system and its monocoque construction.

Considering its price tag, I was taken aback at the Vantage 3-12x44 SF's optical performance. Under test conditions, it bettered my expectations – always high when it comes to any optic carrying the Hawke moniker – in every single department (for more, see the panel *Optical performance*).

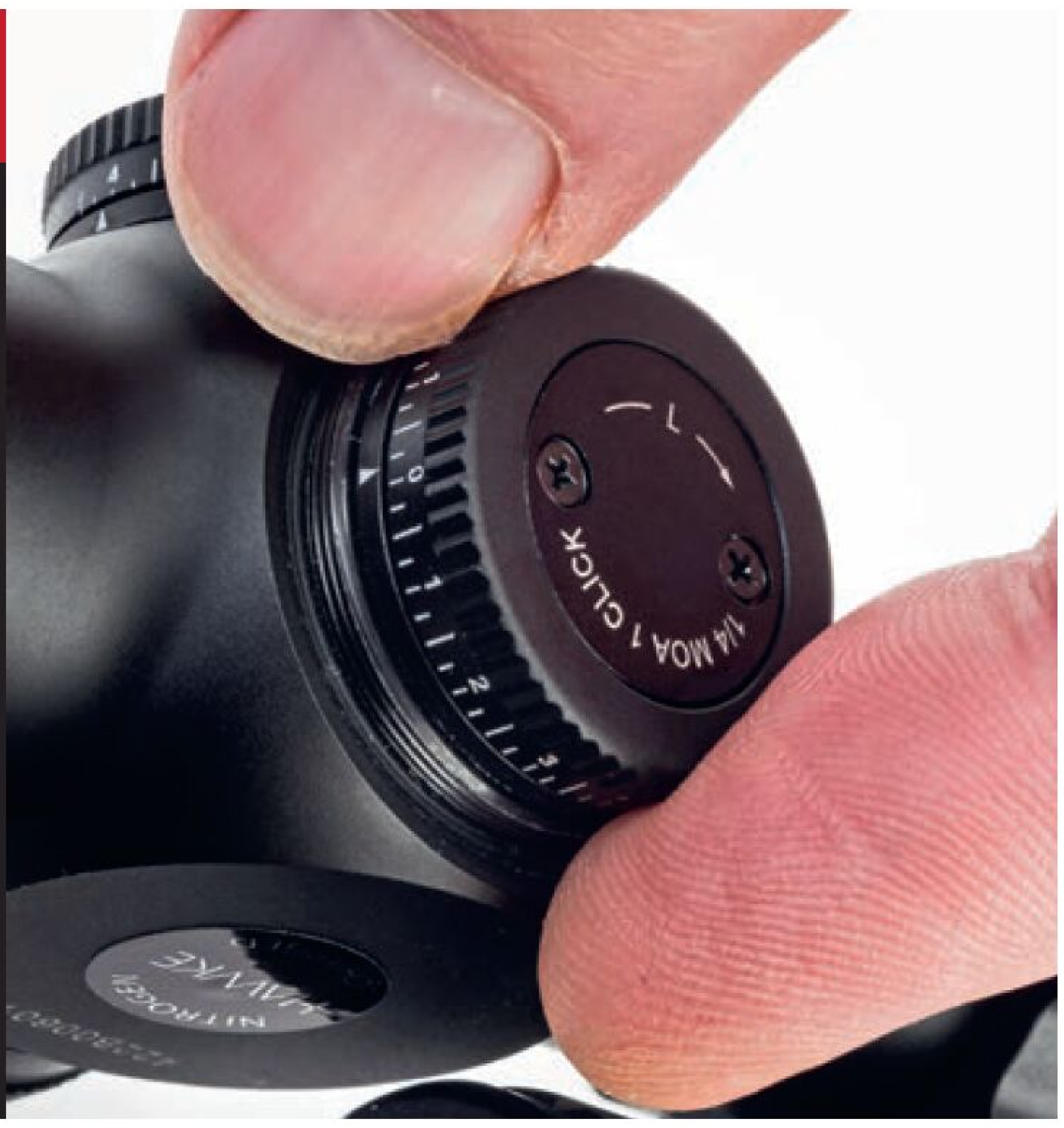
It also did in real world conditions, too, returning a bright sight picture in the trickiest of scenarios. I put this down to the green-blue coating that Hawke applies to the objective lens. Plus, at 44mm diameter, you get 264mm^2 more light-gathering surface area than a conventional 40mm scope. Dark woods; dusk shooting with a bright overhead sky; contra-jour targets – the scope handled them all with aplomb.

To sum things up, the Hawke Vantage 3-12x44 SF is the kind of scope that's unashamedly a practical performer. It might look a little bland on the outside, but there's nothing really missing. It gives you sidewheel parallax, 1/4MOA and low-profile turrets, an oversize objective, multi-stadia crosshair, quick focus, a healthy magnification range, a one-piece tube and a lifetime guarantee. And a performance well above its price point.

What more would you want from a scope than that? ■

RESETTING THE TURRETS TO "0"

Once you've zeroed the Vantage to your rifle, the verniers of the elevation and windage turrets probably won't align to "0". But they're easily resettable. Just slacken (not remove) the two Philips head screws on the top of the turrets with a PH00 driver (not supplied). Then free-spin the verniers to the "0" setting and retighten the screws. That way, if you ever adjust the turrets, you'll always be able to return to your original "0" reference.



A PERFECT STRIKE EVEN IN THE LOWEST LIGHT

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1. Semi-target lockable turrets with MIL adjustment
2. Side parallax adjustment eliminates parallax error and assist in range finding. Illuminated reticle with separate on-off and brightness control
3. Super bright multi coated optics for a new standard of light transfer

Models available:
4-16x50 F1/F2
6-24x50 F1/F2
8-32x50 F1

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OPTICS

BRAVO, ALPHA

In his quest for the ultimate hunter's airgun, Mick Garvey takes on the greys with a Daystate Alpha Wolf for company

Daystate
Alpha Wolf
Daystate

The cover and support provided by Mick's truck was ideal

Last month's outing with the Daystate Red Wolf set a high bar, and recreating similar conditions in the woods and fields is near impossible. However, in pursuit of fairness, I returned to the same farm, hoping for conditions that might, in turn, yield comparable results.

The Daystate Alpha Wolf had been zero-checked with the 50.15gr Emperors, but the results were off. The onboard digital computer revealed that the previous settings were for 44.75gr Emperor Lites. Luckily, I still had half a tin from my last outing. I'd say the 44.75s suited the gun better than the 50s, although an adjustment might help fine-tune this. For now, the grouping was satisfactory, and a power-level check on my chronograph matched the onboard readout.

The route to the rabbit fields takes me past a wide paddock, usually with sheep grazing. This time, however, I spotted a large rabbit at 80 yards. Initially thinking it was a hare, the excellent MTC King Cobra scope confirmed otherwise. I rested on a wooden gate, controlled my

ALPHA WOLF
Daystate

breathing, aimed slightly above its head, and, within seconds, it was down. Sadly, upon retrieving it, I noticed signs of myxomatosis – the first case I'd seen here, which was disappointing to say the least.

No more rabbits appeared in this paddock, though I managed to take a clean one in the usual area. However, there was a concerning lack of other sightings. Perhaps it was due to the conditions. A national champion fisherman I know uses a barometer app to plan his fishing based on air pressure, and I'm considering investigating whether this might apply to hunting, too.

After giving it a further 45 minutes, I moved on, scanning surrounding fields. Only a few rabbits sat in neighbouring fields, but a small wood with several oak trees caught my eye – squirrels were active, and a few pigeons dotted the branches. The pigeons took off before I could get close, but the grey squirrels were preoccupied with acorns. A dry stone wall served as my support, with my Tier-One carbon tactical bipod attached to the underslung Picatinny rail. I'm so impressed with these bipods that I now have two, which I use on various rifles.

I managed to approach within 60 yards without alarming the

The Alpha Wolf teamed with the InfiRay FH35R finder is a formidable combination

ALPHA WOLF
Daystate
Daystate
FINDER

squirrels. The InfiRay spotter easily picked out "live" heat sources. Two squirrels sat halfway up the tree – one eating and the other grooming itself. I aimed at the lower one to avoid disturbing the other, and the 44.75gr pellet hit perfectly, sending it to the ground. The other squirrel didn't even flinch. Aiming at its heart/lung area, the Emperor Lite struck true again, and it folded, dropping with a thud.

Surprisingly, this drew three more squirrels, likely youngsters, to the fallen one. Their attention wasn't on me, making it easy to dispatch two on the ground. The third squirrel eventually sensed danger, retreating up the trunk, but not far. At only 5ft up, it gave me a perfect side shot, and the sound of the pellet meeting skull was unmistakable. The 0dB stealth silencer from Tony Belas effectively quietened the 80ft/lb shot and looks impressive, too.

An adjustable cheek piece, digital readout and a beautiful stock

AN ESTATE FULL OF GREYS

The morning ended all too quickly, but I had other work awaiting me on newly allocated land for red squirrel conservation. This vast Cumbrian estate is reportedly "full of greys," although I've heard that before. A walk with the gamekeeper revealed likely hotspots and good places for advantage points and hides. We saw a few greys, which was encouraging. One area with barren beeches and a few productive oaks stood out. I could park the truck within 60 yards, using it as cover and support. I set up a feeder, trap, and trail camera, intending to return early the next morning.

With the Alpha recharged, the remaining 44.75 pellets in my pocket, and the dive bottle stashed in the truck just in case, I was ready. In the dark, the thermal detected a definite heat source — a grey in the trap. Previous experience suggested that trapped greys could attract others, so I waited to see what would happen. Positioned near another feeder and trap by an unused pheasant pen, I had good cover and shooting support from a beech tree.

The Daystate Alpha Wolf represents the cutting edge in today's airgun technology. Fully programmable for pellet weight, power and speed, it's all accessible at your fingertips. Is this too much for the average shooter? It's certainly useful for FAC airguns and, to an extent, sub-12ft/lb airguns. If you enjoy tinkering without internal modifications, the Alpha is worth considering. While it comes at a price, it may well reflect the future of airguns. You can connect it to a computer for data transfers, choose 480cc or 580cc bottles for more shots, and even add a second magazine to double shot capacity. With a wealth of high-quality aftermarket accessories, it can be thoroughly customised. However, its .30 calibre limits its use to FAC holders – sub-12ft/lb just wouldn't cut it, which is a drawback for its appeal as the ultimate hunting airgun. While a .177 or .22 would reach a larger audience, much of the technology would likely be underutilised. As for myself, I'm leaning towards the Red Wolf, which is unusual as I generally prefer a tactical look, though I do have my eye on other options from the Daystate range.

Daystate
ENGLAND
FIRE
bar
Daystate

The trigger and safety catch were easy to use

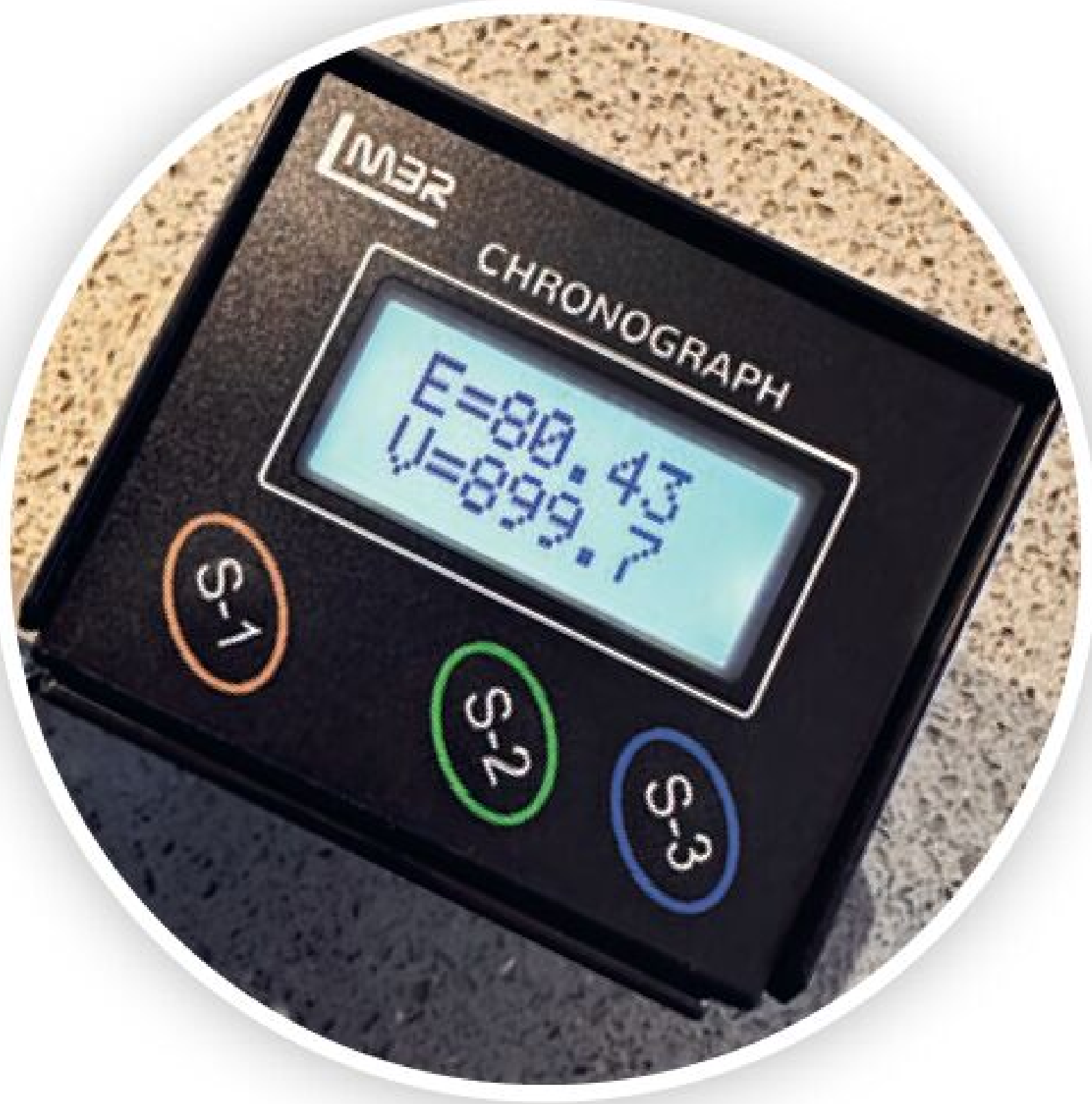
TIER ONE
A-TAC

Mick fitted his Tier-One tactical bipod to the under-slung Picatinny rail

Back to the greys. They arrived fast, making a beeline for the free feed. Before long, I had half a dozen down under the feeder, plus the one in the trap. The Alpha performed flawlessly, never missing a beat. A lull was interrupted by the distinct tapping of a feeder lid. Turning with the thermal, I saw a grey at the feeder and another on a fallen tree, which I'd scattered with loose feed. These two were quickly dispatched, and an alert third revealed itself by chattering in the branches. At around 40 yards, the Alpha sent it flying from its perch — the power of the 80ft/lb rifle on full display.

One memorable shot came later. The InfiRay Finder identified a heat source and the King Cobra confirmed it: a grey squirrel at 70 yards. Threading the shot through leaves and branches, with my Hilux bonnet and Tier-One bipod providing solid support, I paused, exhaled and gently squeezed the trigger. The pellet met its mark, instantly dropping the squirrel — a satisfying shot and a testament to the Alpha's performance.

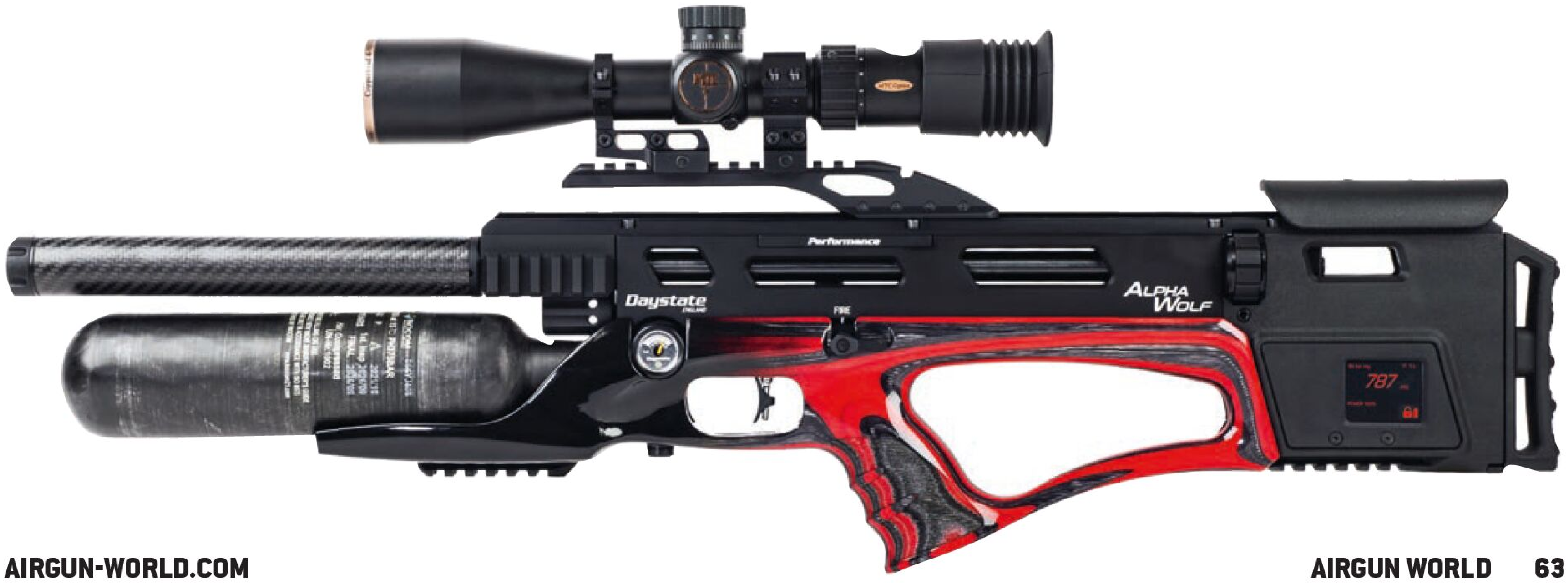
So, is this the ultimate hunter airgun? It's certainly a strong contender and deserves a place on any top airgun list. ■


LMBR
CHRONOGRAPH
E=80.43
V=899.7
S-1
S-2
S-3

Mick's chronograph readings matched those found on the Alpha Wolf

RANGEMASTER
EMPEROR LITE
2,900 grams
CAL 7.62mm .30"
44.75 grains
150
MATCH GRADE AIR RIFLE PELLETS FOR BENCH REST AND HUNTING
PRECISION-MADE IN CZECH REPUBLIC

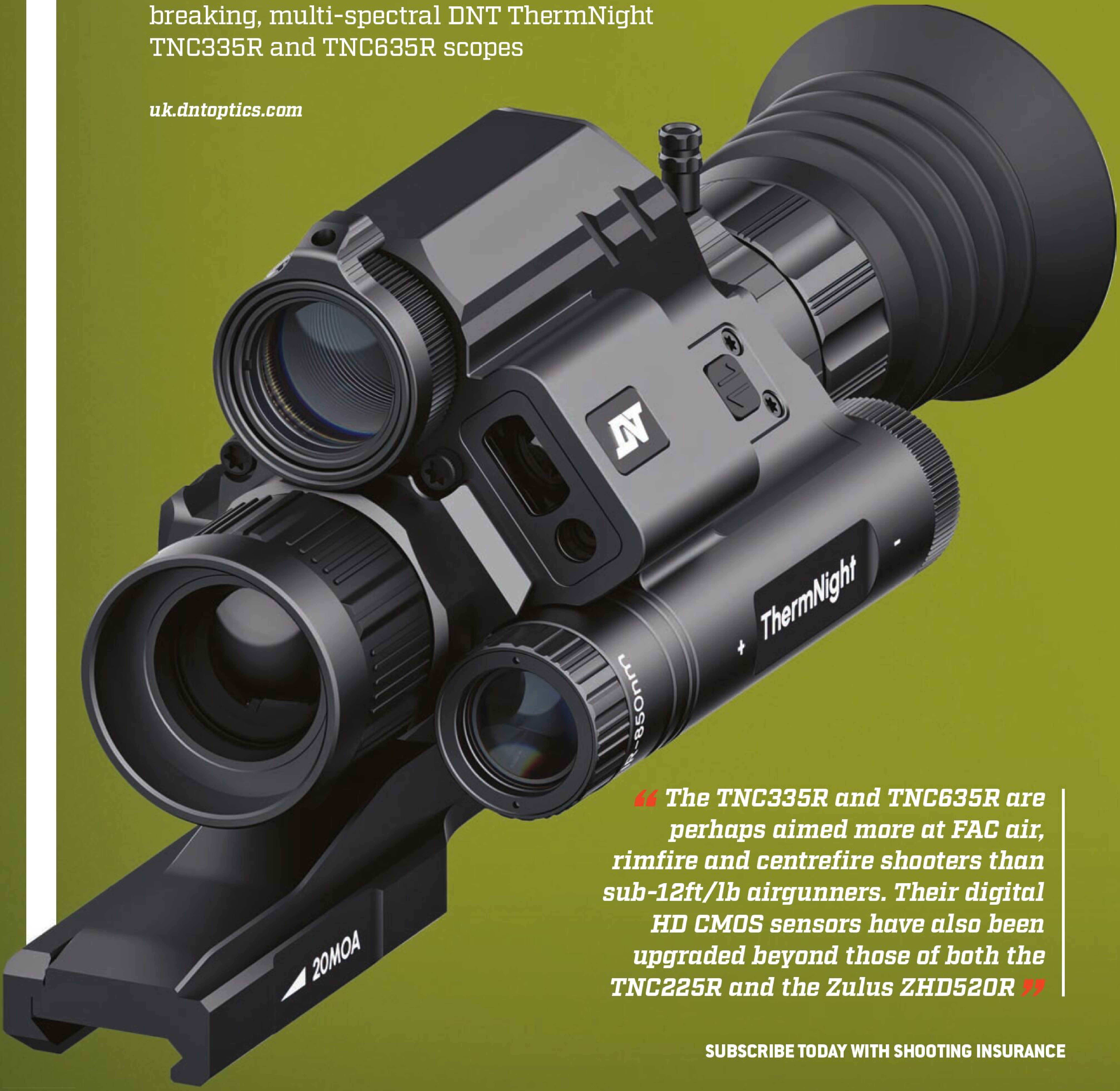
The Rangemaster Emperor Lites worked wonders in the field


Performance
Daystate
ALPHA WOLF
FIRE
787

DOUBLE DELIGHT

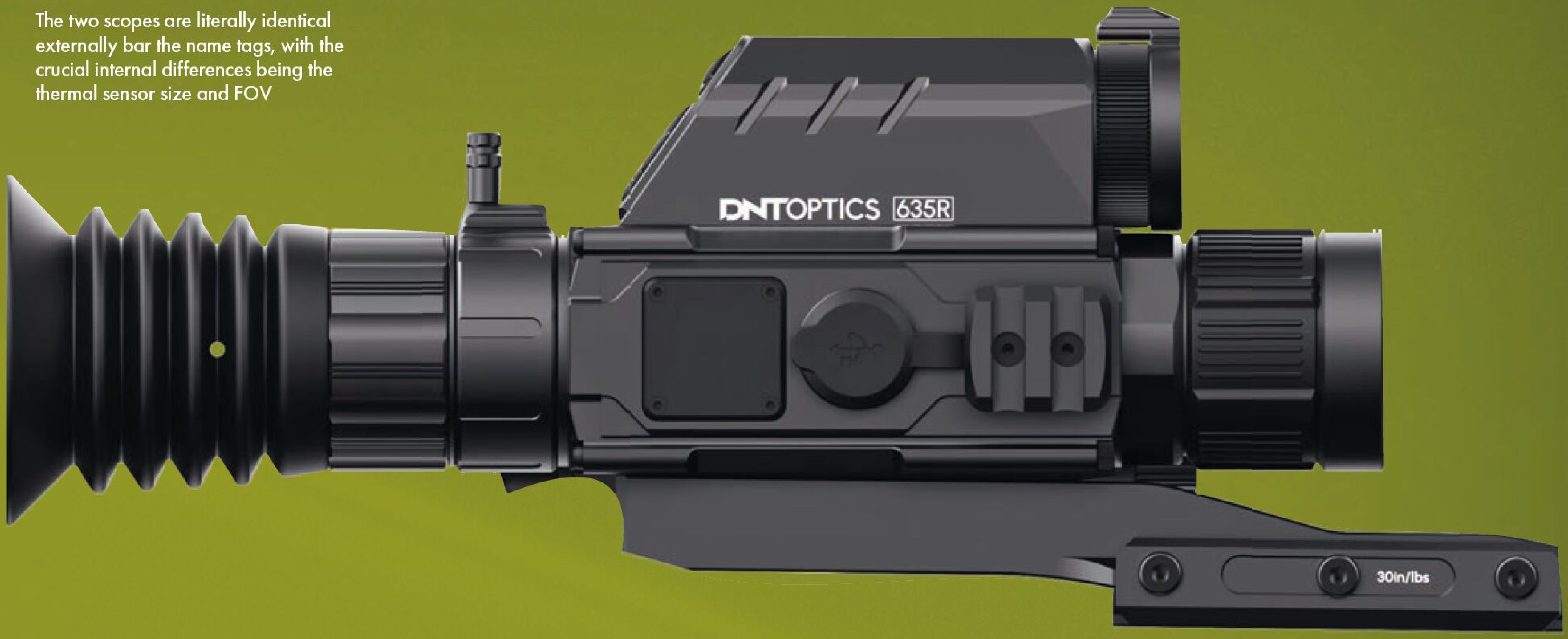
Russ Douglas gets a first look at the ground-breaking, multi-spectral DNT ThermNight TNC335R and TNC635R scopes

uk.dntoptics.com



> ***“The TNC335R and TNC635R are perhaps aimed more at FAC air, rimfire and centrefire shooters than sub-12ft/lb airgunners. Their digital HD CMOS sensors have also been upgraded beyond those of both the TNC225R and the Zulus ZHD520R”***

The two scopes are literally identical externally bar the name tags, with the crucial internal differences being the thermal sensor size and FOV



The team behind the DNT ThermNight TNC225R has not sat idle since it was unveiled at the British Shooting Show back in February. There were rumours right from the start of that being "only" the base (thermal) model, with higher specification models to come. I'm thrilled that scope's 256x192px thermal sensor is more than up for the job within UK sub-12ft/lb airgun ranges, and the price point is groundbreaking for a multi-spectral scope, never mind one with all the other onboard facilities. For me, that "job" will be wide-angle thermal spotting in the main display, while simultaneously allowing precise targeting via crosshairs within a HD picture-in-picture (PIP) window. After having heard snippets about the two upcoming models for a while, I'm finally able to reveal more details about two new models.

NEW MODELS, BOTH PERFORMING DIFFERENTLY

The TNC335R and TNC635R are perhaps aimed more at FAC air, rimfire and centrefire shooters than sub-12ft/lb airgunners. Their digital (day and night) HD CMOS sensors have been upgraded beyond those of both the TNC225R and the popular Zulus ZHD520R, with the same 5x-20x digital zoom factor, increasing in 2.5 magnification steps. Now, with upgraded thermal sensors and larger Germanium objective lenses, they offer the following specifications: TNC335R, 384 x 288px thermal and 35mm lens; TNC635R, 640 x 512px thermal and 35mm lens.

Both scopes have an impressive 18mk NETD (net extreme temperature deviation, measured in milli-kelvins) sensitivity. A measure of just how sensitive they are to detect tiny temperature differences, and therefore supply a sharper, more detailed thermal image, (the lower the NETD value, the more sensitive the device to spot prey and wildlife).

Directly comparing both, the 335R's thermal channel has a base magnification of 2.5x, and a noticeably narrower field of view (FOV), whereas the 635R's base magnification is lower still at 1.5x, offering a correspondingly wider FOV. (Note. The actual FOV values have not yet been released). Here are the zoom values for both scopes' digital and thermal channels.

TNC335R

Digital channel
5x / 7.5x/10x/12.5x/15x/17.5x /20x
Thermal channel
2.5x / 3.75x/5x/6.25x/7.5x/8.75x/10x

TNC635R

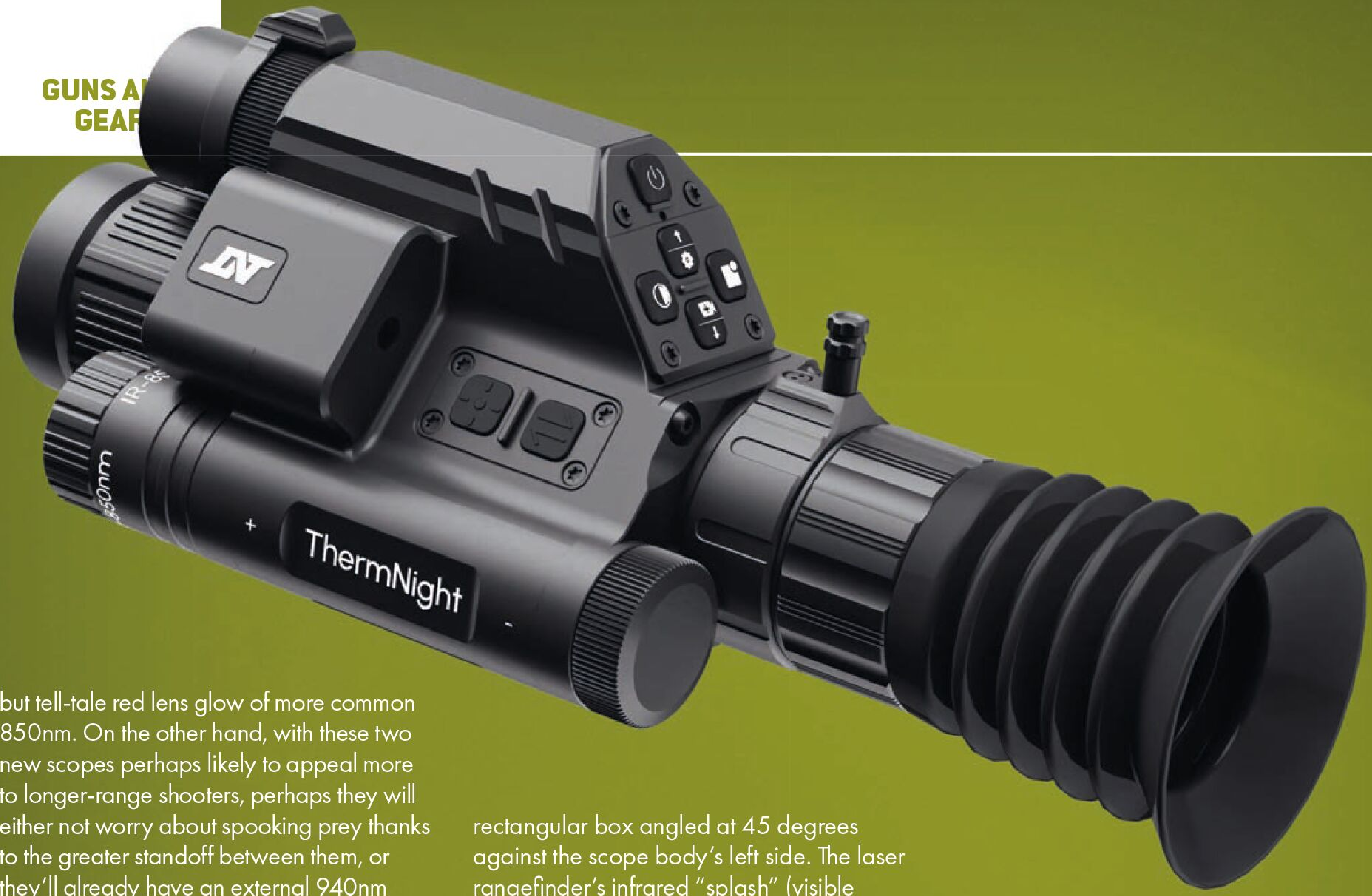
Digital channel
5x/7.5x/10x/12.5x/15x/17.5x/20x
Thermal channel
1.5x/2.25x/3x/3.75x/4.5x/5.25x/6x

Via a firmware improvement, the thermal channel can now also be locked if required. So, the HD digital image could be zoomed to assist targeting, while leaving the thermal image at base magnification for wide-angle spotting. This is a great option to allow us to precisely target one area, then if another/better target presents itself in the foreground/periphery, it won't be missed by being excluded from the FOV. If your preference is to have the HD view in the main display and the wide-angle thermal view in the PIP, one button toggles those views, to suit both your preferences and any changing situation.

AVAILABILITY AND SOME MAJOR CHANGES

According to DTN, both new scopes are due to be on our retailers' shelves by the British Shooting Show in February 2025. Prices have not yet been revealed. Changes? The most obvious change is the shape. DNT has upgraded the power supply from a removable 18650 battery to a 21700. It's still a flat-top Lithium-Ion battery, but with approximately 20% greater capacity as, after-all, "21700" literally signifies a battery body 21mm diameter and 70mm long. DNT quotes five hours run time on one battery. These batteries are charged in a mains charger and my Nitecore four-bay charger charges both 18650s and 21700s. The battery compartment being a tubular form making-up the bulk of the infrared illuminator, underneath the laser rangefinder, does mean these new models are a slightly different/squatter-looking shape. They won't accept the existing TNC225R's 940nm (covert) alternate head, which is swappable between it and the two Zulus scopes. DNT is already working on providing an optional alternative 940nm pill for these new enhanced scopes, although due to the redesigned scope body this will only be swappable between them, and not across to the 18650-equippped TNC225R or Zulus night-vision scopes.

I've spoken to many fellow pest controllers who swear by the more covert 940nm wavelength illuminators to reduce chances of spooking their prey, from even the faint



but tell-tale red lens glow of more common 850nm. On the other hand, with these two new scopes perhaps likely to appeal more to longer-range shooters, perhaps they will either not worry about spooking prey thanks to the greater standoff between them, or they'll already have an external 940nm infrared torch for that purpose.

Such accessories can, again, simply be mounted on the two-slot Picatinny accessory rail on the right-hand side of the scope (underneath which is the pinhole for the external microphone).

DNT has made the battery compartment cap knurling slightly grippier, and the threads a touch less fine. They also improved the "handiness" of the digital zoom control by upgrading it to a 12mm long throw lever, projecting out from a pleasantly firm collar, just aft of the scope body, in front of the dioptre focus ring and removeable eyecup. This glove-friendly improvement rotates from just left of vertical position at base magnification, to around 60 degrees clockwise (down/right) at maximum zoom. A glance or feel of the lever position (e.g. in darkness) lets you know the current magnification, perhaps a helpful aid for some situations. The simple rubber eyecup has no threaded collar, so can now be removed or remounted simply by stretching it on or off, as required — no unscrewing involved. Another improvement many might miss at first glance is the right side's small 5G WiFi transmitter cover is now plastic, to better allow the transmission of signal between scope and smartphone: a brilliant touch.

SO WHAT ELSE IS NEW?

Although the controls are very similar to the Zulus scopes, which helps with familiarity, the control buttons are now rubberised, with a gentle click with each press, for more positive feedback.

The scope body accommodates the fatter battery compartment with a redesigned LRF module, literally a rectangular box angled at 45 degrees against the scope body's left side. The laser rangefinder's infrared "splash" (visible in low light or in night-vision mode) is an angled concise slash of light; best of both worlds? I'll leave you to decide, but it looked great to me in night-vision mode).

The back of the (now angled) laser rangefinder module includes a small round clear window, whose discretion belies its usefulness. Enable this "automatic wake-up" (head detection) proximity sensor via the menu, to put the scope into standby when you lower your rifle or move away from the eyepiece. Resume position and the scope wakes, I estimated it took two seconds for the former and one second for the latter. I also tested this functionality while recording; sure enough entering sleep mode stops recording, while waking the scope resumes recording with a fresh video file.

Mounting options will soon be limited to 0MOA or 20MOA Picatinny rails, simply because DNT has received limited demand for the more inclined 35MOA mounts.

The digital objective lens comes with a simple removable (threaded) alloy sleeve, providing a basic sunshade for brighter days, such as autumn's current low sun.

Onboard memory has been doubled (from the TNC225R's 32GB) to 64GB, which from a quick ready reckoning (each three-minute file occupies around 455Mb), should hold almost seven hours of video footage (at an impressive 60fps frame rate).

Aft of the angled laser rangefinder module on the left side, two square buttons separated by a raised edge control the laser rangefinder (one press to range, one to resolve the ballistic solution, another to continue — or a long press to deactivate the laser rangefinder), and the toggle-switching between digital (day or night) image and thermal in the display. All six screws have changed from Allen to T25 Torx head.

And all that's on top of the existing ballistic calculator, automatically determining holdover for each laser rangefinder range, once you've input your eight rifle/scope measurements, created your ballistic table and uploaded it from smartphone to scope.

TIGHT SPLASH

I've reviewed (and owned) several compact scopes in the past, whose laser rangefinder beams started out as skinny stretched vertical lines. These evolved over time to shorter, horizontal beams, much better in my opinion to range possible targets outdoors.

Curious as to how the newly angled laser rangefinder splash looked, I leaned against our lounge wall and popped the TNC335R into night-vision mode. While recording, I ranged the far wall at 12m, then taped some recognisable points visible in the recording (that wall's being stripped ready for redecorating). The diagonal laser rangefinder splash measured around 4cm long, which from my reckoning indicates a beam spread of approximately 0.2 degrees/12 MOA.

It's pretty concise with minimal scruffy overspill, so I reckon should prove practical in use, although there's still no user-adjustment facility, to reposition the laser rangefinder's daylight aiming box to match its downrange position at different ranges. All in all, we have here two fantastic scopes. ■

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SHOULD HUNTERS PAY?

Is it time for a new model for airgun hunting syndicates, asks Jamie Chandler

Some argue that we are helping to protect ecosystems on land we shoot over

How much money would you be willing to part with to do your shooting?

In days of yore, when frosts were harsh and winters were long, two intrepid explorers set out before dawn. Leaving the warmth of their glowing stoves hundreds of frosty miles apart, they journeyed separately, aiming to meet in the northernmost part of the realm in search of one another, warmth, food and adventure.

The journey was long, their pre-dawn grogginess clinging on, and the frozen ground treacherous underfoot. But upon meeting and being greeted with warmth and breakfast by a kind innkeeper, the adventurers knew this was just the start of a memorable quest... or at least, that's how I remember it—with a touch of embellishment.

It was about five years ago, perhaps more, when Dave Barham and I set out for a day's airgun hunting arranged through a sporting agent I know. Our destination was one of his clients' driven shoots. The gamekeeper was a fan of airguns, owning an impressive .177 HW 80 tuned to around 28ft/lbs, if my memory serves me correctly. Welcomed warmly with bacon sandwiches and plenty of coffee, we set off for the first of four hunts across the estate's drives.

The day was fantastic, with warm hospitality and a superb shepherd's pie for lunch. We bagged a modest number, which could've been more had I not nodded off against a tree in the frosty woodland, surrounded by pigeons. It was two hours, but I claimed 10 minutes.

The day cost £120 each, which sparked feedback that it was a rip-off and a way for "dodgy" gamekeepers to charge for pest control. But such views miss the point entirely. Both Dave and I had other places to hunt, but the chance to meet up, have a guided hunt across four locations, and enjoy full hospitality was incredible. Even just the food at a pub would have cost about £50 each.

In a similar vein, I've hosted European clients for airgun hunting days, as in some countries, it's illegal to shoot with air rifles. For £100 each, including lunch in the field, we had a great day with more shots missed than landed but all left with lasting memories. Some online feedback was brutal, comments suggesting I was "taking sport away from Brits" and "profiteering," as if the cost should cover struggling airgun hunters for free.

However, syndicates can offer access that wouldn't otherwise exist. My brothers belong to a small farm shooting syndicate, and for an additional £500 a year, they gain access to pigeon shooting throughout the non-driven season. This money goes back into supporting the syndicate. As town workers without access to private land, £40 a month for eight months of shooting is well worth it. Syndicates for pigeon shooting, wildfowling, deerstalking, fishing and even metal detecting are options for enthusiasts who lack private access.

And yet, a 2023 survey on a popular airgun forum revealed that 94% of the 150 respondents wouldn't pay to hunt. Many believed they were "doing the farmer a favour" and shouldn't have to pay. But in reality, pest control benefits the hunter as much as the farmer. Just as metal detectorists don't see themselves as doing archaeologists a favour, airgun hunters are there for the enjoyment of a thrilling outing.

Hunting grounds are highly sought after by many of our one million airgunners

HOW DOES £3,000 A YEAR SOUND TO YOU, READERS?

A local farmer, who generally dislikes airgun hunting after some rogue shooters downed eight of his pheasants, was sceptical when I asked if he'd reconsider allowing hunters on his 600 acres. But, when I suggested a syndicate arrangement — perhaps paying him £3,000 a year in exchange for defined rules and regular access — he considered it. For a group of eight, that's only about £30 a month each, cheaper than a gym membership. Such arrangements could outline terms for hunting times, group sizes and locations, ensuring everyone is satisfied.

Kent Wildfowlers offers airgun-only memberships for £195, providing access to over 20 locations. Although it's among the few such clubs, this sets a precedent. In contrast, obtaining private shooting grounds can be tough, especially for those without rural ties. The option to join a syndicate could simplify access, creating opportunities for more hunters and, potentially, encouraging other landowners to open up land.

The long-held idea that "we're doing the farmer a favour, so it should be free" doesn't stand up well in reality. Vermin needs controlling, but professional baiting often keeps them in check. Hunters love what they do — it's a passion, not a chore. I spent years handling rat control on my father-in-law's farm, a necessary job that was far from thrilling.

Airgun hunters could also help preserve ecosystems, given the reintroduction of predators like pine martens. Though they're meant to control grey squirrels, pine martens may also hunt rabbits, hares, pigeons, and other game, potentially affecting local wildlife populations and our sport. By establishing a financial value on hunting areas, landowners may resist predator reintroductions, recognising that it can impact their land and our shared pastime, too.

With over six million airguns in England and an estimated one million airgun hunters, hunting grounds are increasingly sought after. Shotgun certificate holders number around 500,000, many also searching for land access. Based on these rough numbers, there are about five-and-a-half hunters for every farm in England, underlining the demand.

If airgun hunters embraced syndicates, access would likely improve, with the added benefit of self-regulating standards to ensure responsible practices. As this concept becomes more common, it could make land access easier, creating a more secure future for the sport.

To those resistant to the idea, I say, why not consider it? Airgun hunting remains among the most affordable shooting sports in the UK, with ammunition costing just 3.5p per shot compared to around 40p for shotgun cartridges. Even high-end air rifles rival the price of mid-range shotguns, so repurposing the cost of a takeaway each month towards a syndicate could open more grounds to hunt, strengthening and protecting our sport.

Think about it, and let us know your thoughts. Perhaps you're already in a syndicate arrangement. If so, how does it work for you? Good experiences? Bad? I'd certainly love to hear them. ■

Do you agree with Jamie? Let us know via airgunworld@twsgroup.com

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WIN FOUR TICKETS TO THE BRITISH SHOOTING SHOW!

A look ahead to the British Shooting Show, set to take place at the NEC, Birmingham, on 14 - 16 February 2025, and details about how *Airgun World* readers can win tickets to the event

The annual Great British Shooting Show – the only event of its kind where all major manufacturers come together to showcase their latest innovations – offers a wealth of attractions and opportunities for airgunners. This premier event in the shooting industry calendar provides airgunners with a unique chance to explore the latest innovations, test equipment, engage with experts in the field and much, much more.

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

One of the most exciting aspects of the show is the extensive range of opportunities to get hands-on with the latest airguns. Several leading brands will be unveiling brand new products, including BSA, Daystate, Umarex, FX Airguns and Rapid Air Worx.

With over 30 manufacturer ranges available, visitors can try out a wide variety of air rifles and pistols before making a purchase decision. This "try before you buy" experience is invaluable for both novice and experienced shooters looking to upgrade their equipment or explore new options.

THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT

The three-day show showcases a vast array of airguns, optics and accessories from leading manufacturers and retailers. A list of some of the brands visitors can expect to see include Air Arms, Airgun Technology, Airmaks Arms, ASG, BSA, Brocock, Crosman, Daystate, Diana, FX Airguns, Gamo, Hatsan, Rapid Air Worx (RAW), Sig Air, Sig Sauer, Stoeger, Umarex, Webley and Weihrauch.

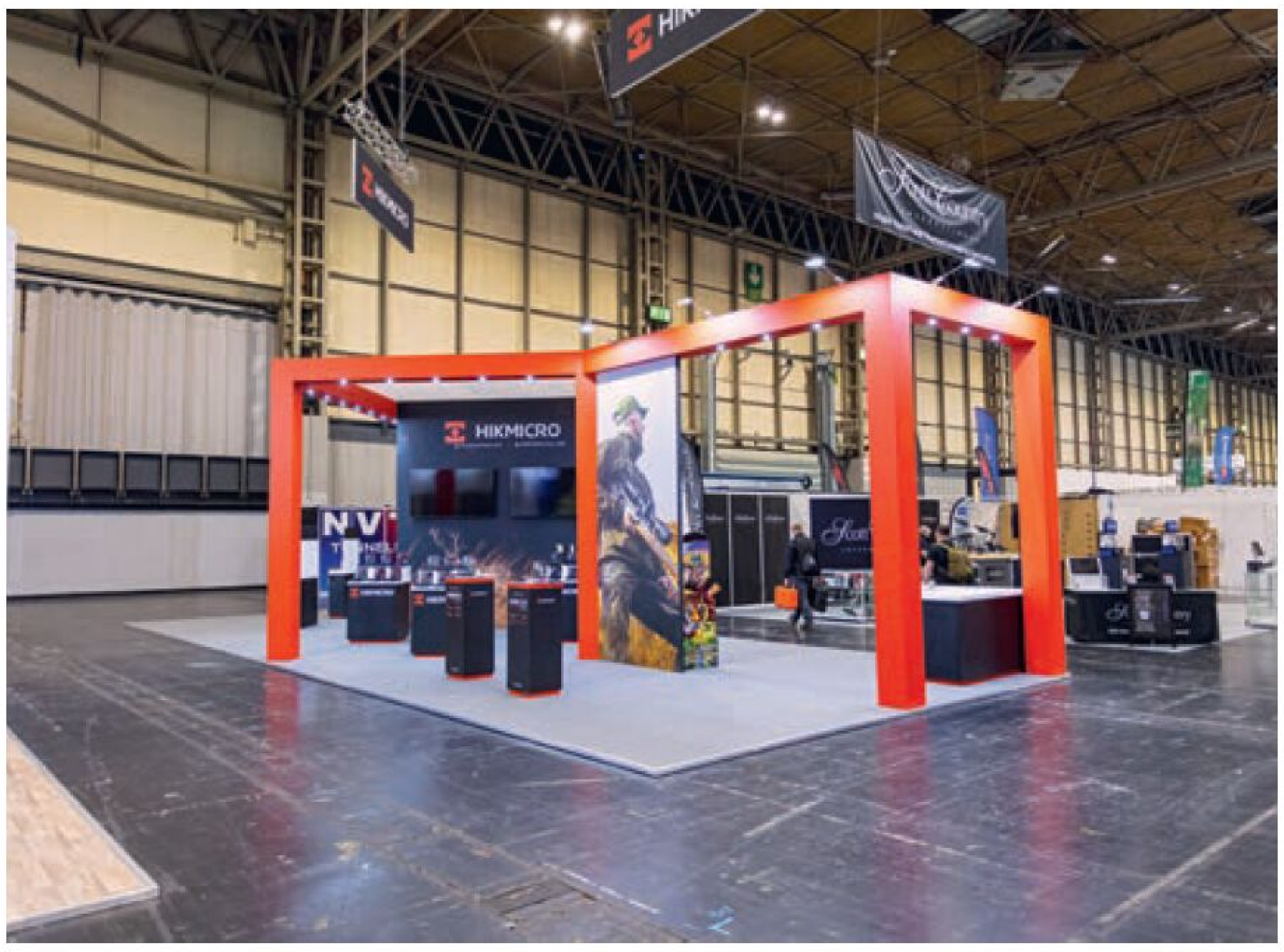
EXPERT ADVICE AND DEMONSTRATIONS

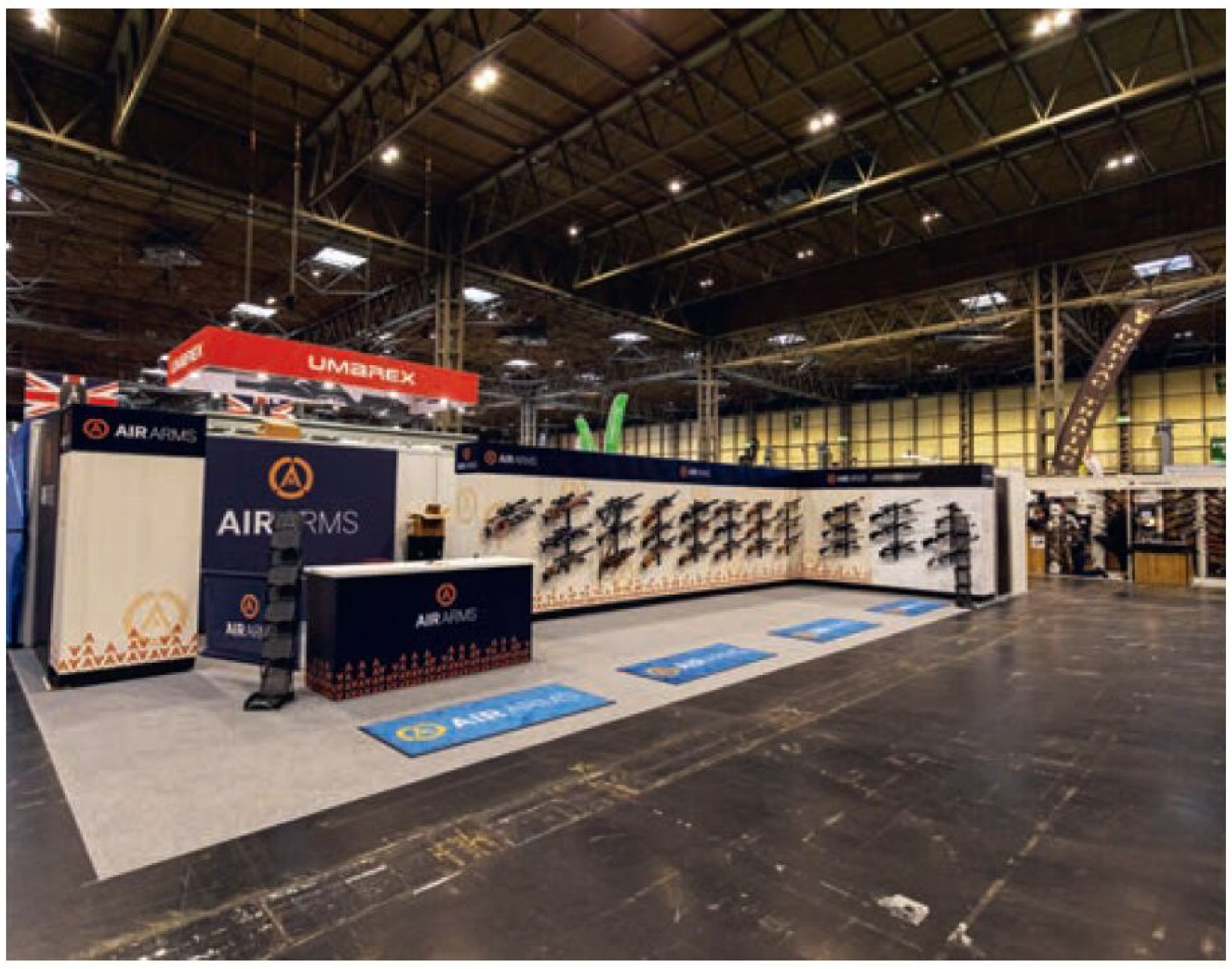
Throughout the event, airgunners can benefit from the wealth of knowledge shared by industry professionals. Manufacturers' representatives are on hand to provide detailed information about their products and offer expert advice on selecting the right equipment for individual needs.

COMPETITIONS AND ACTIVITIES

The British Shooting Show offers various competitions and activities that cater to airgunners of all skill levels. These events provide an excellent opportunity to test your marksmanship, learn new techniques, and engage with fellow enthusiasts in a friendly, competitive environment.

Crackshot Airgun Centre is holding a charity fundraising draw, with all proceeds donated between Children's Hospice South West and The Devon Clinic. With a prize fund totalling more than £5,500, it includes an Air Arms Ultimate Sporter, a BRK Ghost, a Walther RM8 Varmint kit, Hatsan Flash kit, Reximex Lyra, Webley MK6 pistol, Hawke Airmax scope, a Weihrauch XLK silencer and a 12-month





subscription to *Airgun World*. Tickets cost £10 each and are available via the Crackshot website and at BSS. The nine winners will be announced on Sunday afternoon of the show.

NETWORKING AND COMMUNITY

The British Shooting Show is an ideal venue for airgunners to connect with like-minded individuals, join clubs, and become part of the larger shooting community. It's an excellent opportunity to share experiences, learn from others, and make lasting connections within the airgunning world.

WIN TICKETS!

Airgun World has four tickets for all three days of the show, worth £420, up for grabs! For a chance of winning, simply sign up to the *Airgun World* e-newsletter via airgun-world.com. One lucky winner will be drawn at random on 14 January 2025. Which of your three friends would you take if you won?

MEET THE *AIRGUN WORLD* TEAM

The entire team will be at the British Shooting Show. If you would like to make an appointment to discuss editorial, email: airgunworld@twsgroup.com. If you would like to book a meeting regarding advertising opportunities, email: vanessa.zeolla@twsgroup.com. ■

5 OF THE BEST ATVs

Most gamekeepers and farmers will spend a good chunk of their time hauling grain, forage, water or fencing equipment from one side of their ground to another, so every aspect of their all-terrain vehicle needs to be dependable and ergonomic. Because of the ATV's importance in fieldsports, shooting estates such as Bettws Hall find synergy in aligning themselves with industry giants such as Kawasaki, which produces the iconic Mule range. EJ Churchill has found similar benefits with Polaris.

However, there are plenty of vehicles that are perfectly suited to the rigours of the field and here we have selected five of our favourite side-by-side ATVs.

KUBOTA RTV-X900

The Kubota RTV-X900 brings a smoother ride, more comfort, even better drivability and more legroom to Kubota's popular RTV Series. So wherever you want to go, whatever the terrain, you can count on the RTV-X900 to get you there. Ergonomically designed for optimum driver and passenger comfort and control, the RTV-X900 offers improved leg room, deluxe split-bench seat, digital easy read instrument panel and additional under seat storage, taking Kubota's RTV driving experience to new levels of comfort and convenience.

KUK.KUBOTA-EU.COM

CAN AM DEFENDER XT HD10

This vehicle comes with power steering, a 1,134kg towing capacity and a sizeable cargo box. The 976cc, fuel-injected V-twin engine produces 82 horsepower and 93Nm of torque. Electronic aids include hill descent control and three drive modes – ECO, ECO Off and Work. The HD10 also has reinforced seats, a skid plate and a 2,000kg factory installed winch. You can also option a heater, air conditioner, doors and windshield with a wiper blade.

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POLARIS RANGER DIESEL DELUXE

As the ultimate utility workhorse, the Ranger Diesel Deluxe is durable, dependable and capable thanks to its impressive 1,134kg towing capacity and 730kg payload. Its features include Polaris's On-Demand all-wheel drive, electric power-steering and Active Descent Control. Building on the already best-selling side-by-side in the industry, the 2025 Ranger line-up features a redesigned front end and new front bumper for added robustness, an upgraded Gen2 transmission for smooth and consistent shifting, and intuitive accessories for added rider convenience and a truly immersive off-road experience.

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KAWASAKI MULE PRO-DX

The utility vehicle of choice for many professionals such as farmers and gamekeepers, the Mule Pro-DX is at the top of the Kawasaki Mule series. A powerful yet economical 993cc diesel engine offers excellent performance for hauling loads, as well as easy low-speed control. If cargo capacity is your greatest priority, then the Mule Pro-DX is sure to be your ATV of choice. Its cargo bed is the largest in its class, ensuring that it can carry more, and carry it more easily.

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YAMAHA VIKING EPS

The spacious three-seat layout and walk-through floor ensure a comfortable and safe drive every time for you and your colleagues. Its double-wishbone suspension is ready to take on the most rugged terrain – while the Euro-pallet sized tipping cargo bed can carry loads up to 272kg. Equipped with Yamaha's On-Command drive system with 2WD, 4WD and 4WD with diff lock and powered by a high-torque 686cc engine, the Viking is well suited to hard work in the field.

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WINTER WISDOM

Gary Chillingworth offers some advice about how to take care of your kit now that temperatures, rain and snow are falling right across the country

With rain, wind and snow now here, it's a good time to talk about taking care of your kit. Here are a few tips, tricks and recommendations for products I've found helpful over the years.

RAIN CAN BE YOUR FRIEND

Shooting in the rain isn't always pleasant, but sometimes it's surprisingly helpful. One of my best shoots was in windy, pouring rain at Misfits years ago. The rain showed exactly how the wind was moving, which helped me score extra points. So, whether you're competing or hunting, take a moment to observe the rain — it may give you a useful edge.

RIFLES AND RAIN

Many of us carry our rifles in gun bags, which are great for protection but tend to trap rain. As you take your gun in and out, moisture builds up inside the bag, which can cause damage. To avoid this, here's a tip: when you're done shooting, dry your rifle thoroughly with a microfiber cloth. Wrap it in a towel (like a burrito) before putting it back in the bag for the journey home. This helps prevent moisture from settling in while it's stored.

Watch out for gaps between the rifle and the stock. For instance, on my TX, there's a space between the action and the wood where water can seep in. Some people use Vaseline to prevent this, though I can't confirm if it affects the rifle's bluing, so I'd be cautious. If your rifle does get wet, take it apart and dry both the action and stock. Just remember to go and check your zero afterward.

A hairdryer on low can help dry hard-to-reach areas, but avoid high heat or placing your rifle near a radiator, as this could crack the stock.

VP90 PATCHES AND SACHETS

Napier's VP90 products are fantastic for keeping rust at bay. The VP90 field patches come in packs of 10; once you've dried your rifle, wipe it down with one of these patches. They not only clean the gun but also add a protective anti-corrosion coating. I make a habit of using one each time I reassemble my rifle.

VP90 sachets are another essential. I keep one in my gun cabinet, where it releases an anti-rust compound. They last about nine months, and for about £10 a year, they're a worthwhile investment.

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Silica bags help to absorb any condensation that might build up in your gun cabinet

Small silica gel packets (the kind you get with electronics) are also useful. I buy them in bulk online and keep them in my cabinet and gun cases to help absorb any condensation. If storing a rifle, leave some air in the air reservoir to prevent moisture build-up.

A QUICK NOTE ON SCOPES

The body of your scope can be wiped with a microfiber cloth, but the lenses need a gentler touch. Avoid using pocket tissues, as they can be abrasive. Instead, use lens cleaning cloths from an optician. If you're out in the field and need to dry a wet lens, keep small, soft microfiber cloths in a plastic bag. Gently press the cloth to the lens to soak up moisture without rubbing. Then place the used cloth in a separate bag and wash them later in a cloth bag or sports sock in the washing machine.

STAY COMFORTABLE AND DRY WITH THE RIGHT CLOTHING

If you're planning to shoot in the rain, dress accordingly. I use a bib-and-brace set of under-trousers and a high-quality Swedteam jacket to stay warm and dry. When my boots started to leak a bit, I found waterproof Sealskinz socks invaluable—they kept my feet dry and made the whole experience much more comfortable.

Shooting gloves can get muddy and wet, so it's helpful to have a spare pair. Washing your glove is fine, but if you're at a two-day event, putting on a wet glove isn't ideal. And lastly, invest in a good flask. I have a military-style tea can that keeps drinks hot for about four hours. A warm drink can make all the difference when you're cold and damp on the course.

Now a question to all of you readers. How do you keep your airgun shooting kit (and yourselves) warm and dry during the winter months? Email your tips to airgunworld@twsgroup.com

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SQUIRREL BURGERS

Our guest editor shares a tasty and easy recipe that will hit the mark with airgunners of all disciplines

Gareth Wyn Jones is a true champion of field to fork and has long advocated squirrel meat as an ethical and tasy food source.

The grey squirrel has severely impacted native red squirrel populations and woodland health in the UK. By promoting the shooting and consumption of grey squirrels, Gareth underscores its value as an effective wildlife management strategy with a food angle.

Squirrel burgers offer a unique and flavorful experience. The meat, subtly gamey yet mild when soaked in milk, has a tender, juicy texture when blended with pork or turkey. The seasoning then elevates the taste.

Griddled to perfection, the burgers develop a deliciously crisp exterior while remaining succulent inside. Pairing them with bacon adds a smoky savoriness, while a dollop of jam introduces a surprising, delightful sweetness that balances the earthy flavors. Each bite is a harmonious blend of comfort and adventure! ■

FOR TWO BURGERS

INGREDIENTS

3/4 squirrels (minced)
Pork or turkey mince

METHOD

I use a number 10 grinder to mince the squirrel meat and then soak it in milk for a few hours. Soaking the mince overnight is even better, though, as supposedly, this reduces the gaminess of the meat by removing some of the blood.

Drain the squirrel mince, mix with the pork or turkey mince and season well.

Divide and press into burger rounds and chill.

Add any extra seasoning to your taste. Cajun spices work well, but salt and pepper is fine, too.

After that, simply griddle the burgers to a core temperature of 75°C.

Finally, serve with bacon or a jam of your choice.

STAY SAFE AND WITHIN THE LAW

Some basic advice from Taylor Rikje-Pearson (pictured) about how to keep and use your airguns legally, safely and securely

Owning and using an airgun in the UK carries responsibilities relating to both the law and to safe handling. Whether you're an experienced airgun user or just starting out, understanding proper handling, transport and storage practices is therefore essential.

Airgun ownership is subject to firearms law. Currently, if you are 18 years or older and are not a prohibited person, there are no restrictions on buying an air rifle and ammunition. You can use it wherever you have permission to shoot. You're allowed to possess air rifles with a kinetic energy output of up to 12ft/lb and air pistols with up to 6ft/lb without a licence in England and Wales. However, in Scotland, an airgun certificate is required, regardless of power level. Failure to comply with the law could lead to criminal prosecution, resulting in a fine or worse.

Proper handling is critical to prevent accidents. Here are some essential safety tips:

Assume the airgun is always loaded: Even when certain it's unloaded, treat every airgun with the same caution as a live firearm.

Never point an airgun at anyone: Only aim at designated targets in safe shooting areas.

Check your surroundings: Always be aware of people, animals or objects in or near your shooting path to prevent unintended harm coming to them.

Use suitable backstops: Ensure there's a strong, energy absorbing backstop to prevent pellets from ricocheting. When shooting out in the field, make sure that a safe backstop is present to capture the pellet, such as a rising bank of soft soil behind your intended quarry.

There are also specific requirements when transporting an airgun to your intended shooting ground, whether that's on a farm for pest control purposes or to your local target shooting club...

Keep it unloaded: Ensure the airgun is not loaded while it is being transported between places.

Use a secure case: Place your airgun in a locked case to prevent unauthorised access, especially in public areas.

Avoid public display: When carrying an airgun, always keep it covered to prevent alarming others.

Minimise time in public places: Avoid spending unnecessary time with the airgun in public areas, as this can often be misinterpreted by the general public, possibly leading to the police being called out.

> *“Always be aware of people, animals, or objects in or near your shooting path to prevent harm coming to them”*

Store guns securely: A gun safe isn't legally required for airguns which don't require a licence. Lock the airgun in a secure cabinet or store it in a locked case in a discreet area of your home, out of sight of visitors. You can also use a trigger lock or similar device to prevent unauthorised use. Pellets should also be stored away from the airgun itself.

Remember, if there are under 18s present, it is a legal requirement to store an airgun securely, out of sight, and separately from ammunition that you have.

Maintenance: Periodic maintenance is also strongly recommended. We need to clean our airguns at regular intervals, check for wear and tear, and ensure they are working properly, reliably and safely.

Airguns are enjoyable when used responsibly. Following the advice above and in the BASC Air Rifle Code of Practice will help you stay safe and respect the wellbeing of others. The BASC ideal is that all who shoot conduct themselves according to the law and to the highest standards of safety, sportsmanship and courtesy. This includes full respect for their quarry and a practical interest in wildlife conservation and the countryside.

Finally, the law makes no distinction between air rifles and those guns for which you need a licence. They are all classed as firearms, so any offence you may commit can carry a very heavy penalty. Never guess at what the law allows.

For more information, including a guide based on the BASC Air Rifle Code of Practice, visit basc.org.uk/airgunning ■

ON THE BENCH WITH MATT

Matthew Gleaves introduces us to benchrest shooting in the UK, and shares news, tips and advice for those who are keen to explore this area of shooting sports

H&N
ANSCHUTZ
TANGERINE DREAM
AirAbility

Matthew is an advocate for benchrest shooting who is keen to share his passion

A LITTLE BIT OF BACKGROUND ON BENCHREST SHOOTING

Benchrest shooting is a sport of exacting accuracy standards and the tiniest of margins: a whole competition can be decided on a fraction of a millimetre. In the UK, the sub 12ft/lb event is shot at 2mm "bulls" (10 points) at 25 metres, and 6.35mm "bulls" at 50m with our unlimited FAC air rifles. The rifles are supported both front and back via a front rest or bipod and a back bag. We shoot 25 scoring targets plus as many sighting shots as you want per card, within 20 minutes. We shoot three cards per discipline, with a maximum possible score of 750 points. Benchrest UK events are all shot outside, so mastering the wind and elements is an absolute necessity.

THE BENCHREST UK NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS 2024

The British National Air Rifle Championship took place in Portishead on 16-7 November, bringing together the top shooters from around the country. After a tough weekend, with some very challenging weather conditions, Tom Jacobs came out on top in the Sub 12ft/lb category and Maurice Hassard won the Unlimited FAC event, both in turn becoming Benchrest UK National 2024 Champions. I also attended and was lucky enough to win silver in the light Sub 12ft/lb rifle class.

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Matthew Gleaves

A 5p piece offers an insight into just how accurate benchrest shooters need to be

With events like the AirAbility Bootcamp training weekend and the ever-growing commitment of new shooters, the standards are rising fast, so we will be seeing many new champions in the not so distant future, mark my words.

BENCHREST SHOOTING TIP

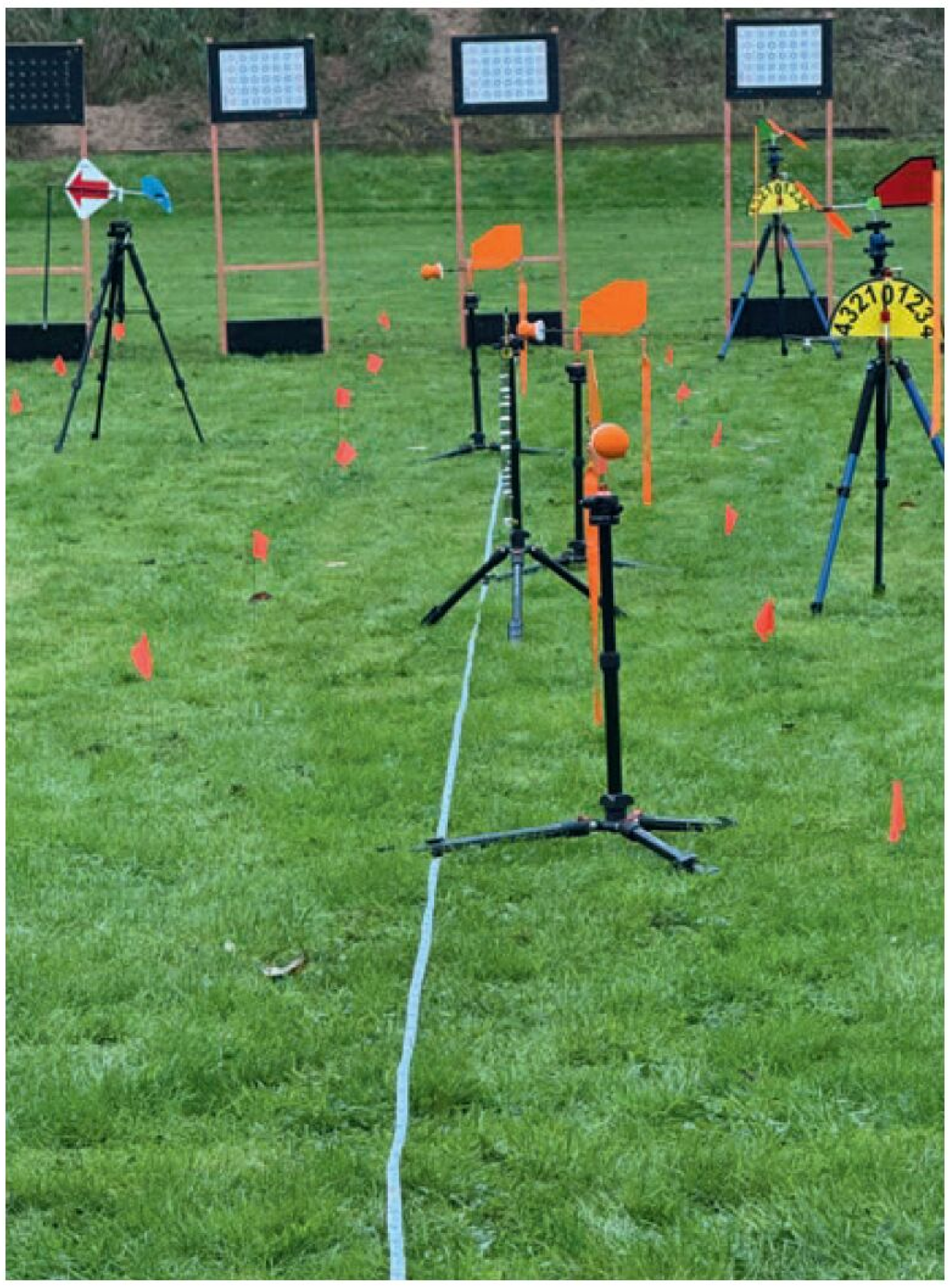
When setting up your wind flags on the range, use a tape measure with the flag placements already marked on it. This will help you set up your flags more consistently, much faster and with less effort.

ANY QUESTIONS?

I am often asked what advice I have for newcomers who are seeking to improve their skills without breaking the bank. My advice is to join a club and visit one of the Benchrest UK events, as well as joining online communities like AirAbility and Benchrest UK Facebook pages. There you will be able to talk to other shooters of all levels and see what they use to achieve the best results within their own budgets. Although this sport is not cheap, you can be really competitive with some carefully considered purchases of new and used equipment.

For more information, head to benchrestuk.com or airability.uk ■

Using a tape measure with flag placements already marked on it helps to save time



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MALDON AND DISTRICT AIRGUN CLUB (M.A.D.)

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The woodland course is one of two outdoor courses on offer across the site

Maldon and District Airgun Club (M.A.D.) is well-regarded within the airgun community and has earned a reputation for innovation and leadership in the shooting world. M.A.D. is known for being a hub of Field Target (FT) and Hunter Field Target (HFT) shooting, and it has played a key role in developing the competitive discipline of HFT stick shooting, which has gained popularity in recent years. The club is home to one of the top HFT teams in the UK, and members frequently contribute to the development and testing of new rules for shooting events, working with organisations such as the UKAHFT. M.A.D. is home to several HFT National and World champions across various classes, from recoiling to PCP (Pre-Charged Pneumatic), and assistance is readily available for newcomers to the sport.

While competition is a major focus, the club also has a large number of recreational shooters, and a supportive, friendly atmosphere prevails among members. M.A.D., which is home to a 70-yard plinking range and a 50-yard benched range, offers a comprehensive range of facilities for shooters of all levels. The plinking ranges are covered, there is a plinking tube that provides a windless environment for rifle setup, and there are also two full courses (one in a meadow, another in the woods).

The club is open 365 days a year from dawn to dusk, with annual memberships available to both newcomers and seasoned shooters alike.

For more information, visit madarc.net ■

M.A.D. has played a key role in developing HFT stick shooting

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THE PERFECT SETTING

Gary Chillingworth heads to Furnace Mill in Kidderminster for the final two rounds of the UKAHFT National series

Furnace Mill is always a fantastic place to shoot, and with it hosting the final two rounds of the UKAHFT National series, I decided it was the perfect opportunity to get out and enjoy some HFT.

As I had only competed in a single round due to my injury, I wasn't in contention for any series prizes. This meant I could take a more relaxed approach — perhaps even entering the open class instead of shooting a springer, or possibly trying a .22.

Since I'd been having a great time using the BRK Ghost for benchrest shooting at home, and as a reader had recently asked whether a bullpup could work for HFT, I thought I'd give it a try and enter the open class with a bullpup. With the Ghost charged and ready, I gathered a few friends and we headed to the depths of Kidderminster in Worcestershire.

When we arrived at Furnace Mill, autumn was in full swing, with the trees displaying an incredible mix of reds, golds and greens. If you've never been to this oasis of a shooting club, I highly recommend it — it's stunning, and you're always welcomed warmly.

Round nine took place on the Saturday and what a course it was, set along a zigzagging footpath carved into the hillside. On odd-numbered targets, we shot on the left side of the path, and on even numbers, we shot on the right, constantly switching sides. This meant that wind direction changed from left to right on odd targets and from right to left on evens. Adding to the challenge, targets on the left were situated below us, at the base of a steep slope, while those on the right were up the hill, above us. So, on each target, we had to judge range and wind, while factoring in slope and the angle.

GHOST
BRK
AIR
HFT

James Le-May shows off his stunning HW100

After 20 targets, my mind was exhausted. The Ghost was performing well, and I had only missed four targets at this point. However, fatigue set in, and I struggled on the final 10 targets, missing seven and finishing with a score of 49 points.

Day two presented a different challenge: it was a flatter course but still with a tricky wind that caught many people out. I was fortunate to be paired with fantastic shooters over the two days. On day one, I shot with Mat and Alicia Franks, and on day two, with James Le-May. All three were incredibly patient and supportive as I navigated the course. My friend Alex Larkin also stayed to help carry my kit on both days, which made a huge difference as without everyone's help, I'm not sure I would have finished.

Day two's course was excellent, and on pegs nine and 10, I learned a valuable lesson in rangefinding. In HFT, the main skill is being able to accurately gauge the target's range, which can be done through various techniques like head-bobbing, measuring hinges or even by using visual markers.

When I reached peg nine, I used the head-bob technique and estimated it to be 40 yards based on a 1 mil-dot parallax error. However, based on past misses marked below the kill zone, I decided to trust the "history" of the target and shot as if it were 45 yards. I missed high — it was indeed 40 yards, and I should have trusted my original judgement.

Then on peg 10, I estimated 40 yards again using the head-bob technique. This time, most misses

Gary had a fantastic time shooting the BRK Ghost

> “Furnace Mill is always a fantastic place to shoot, and with it hosting the final two rounds of the UKAHFT National series, I decided it was the perfect opportunity to get out and enjoy some HFT. As I had only competed in a single round due to my injury, I wasn't in contention for any series prizes”

were low in the kill zone and on the plate, so I trusted my estimation. Unfortunately, I missed low, so I should have relied on the target history. HFT certainly keeps you on your toes.

Many shooters performed impressively over the weekend. In the open class, Elliot Compton took the win on Saturday, with Neil Palmer winning on Sunday. In the springer category, Brett Holiway shot a fantastic 54 on Saturday, while Perry Broad scored an impressive 56 on Sunday.

Ed Tandie and Dan Measures won in the .22 class on Saturday and Sunday respectively. In the ladies category, Gill McNab took both wins, while junior Josh Townsend also achieved a double win, scoring 58 on day two.

The veterans category went to Mark Rackley on Saturday and then to Mike Hymas on Sunday, with Simon Minney taking the sticks title both days.

A big thank you to Optisan, Falcon and JSB for sponsoring the rounds. Their support makes this series so enjoyable. Finally, a huge thanks to Ed and the team, and if you're ever near Kidderminster, do check out Furnace Mill Fisheries — it's well worth a visit. ■

Alicia showed both Mat and myself how to shoot

Furnace Mill is a fantastic place to come and shoot

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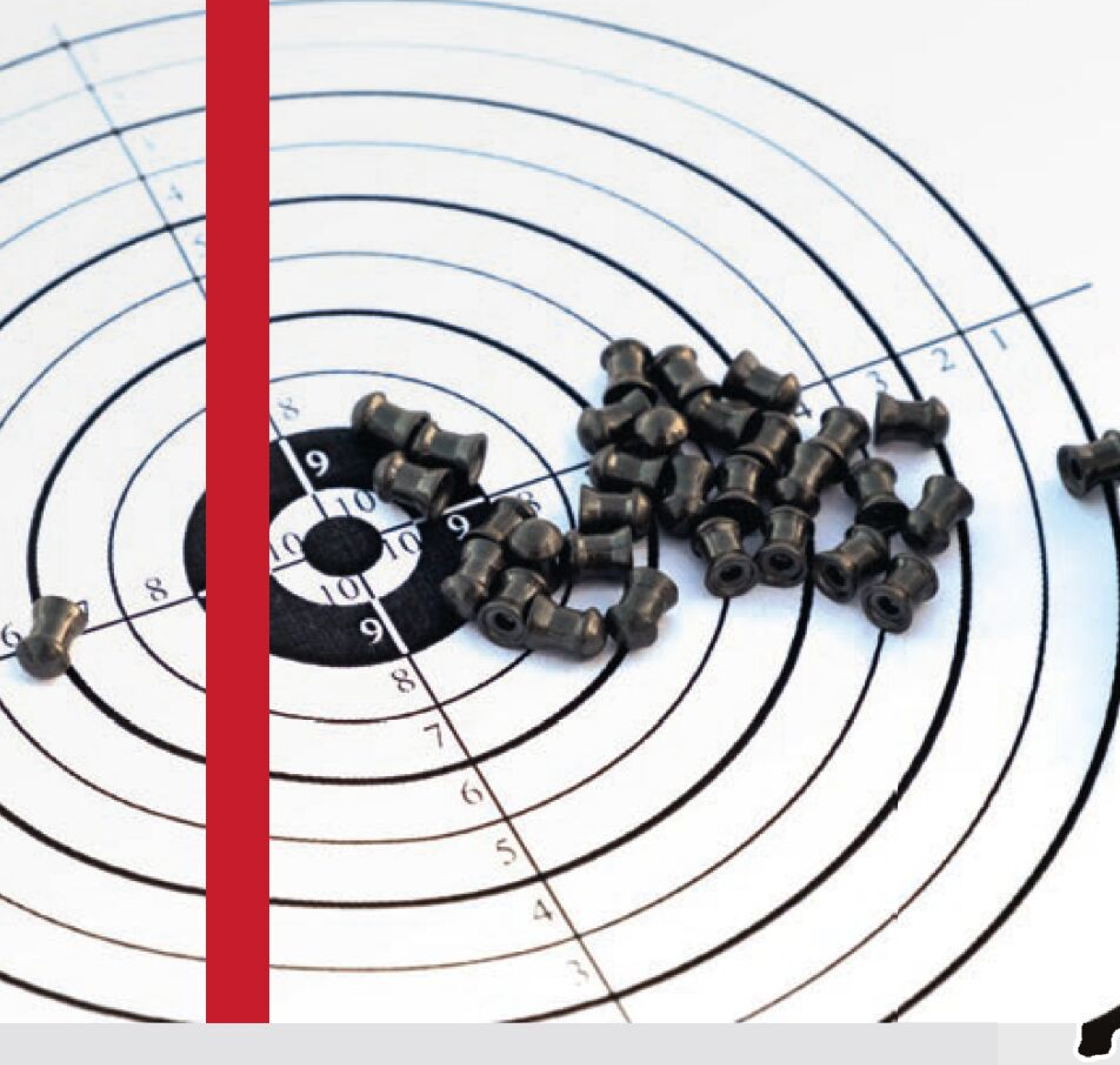

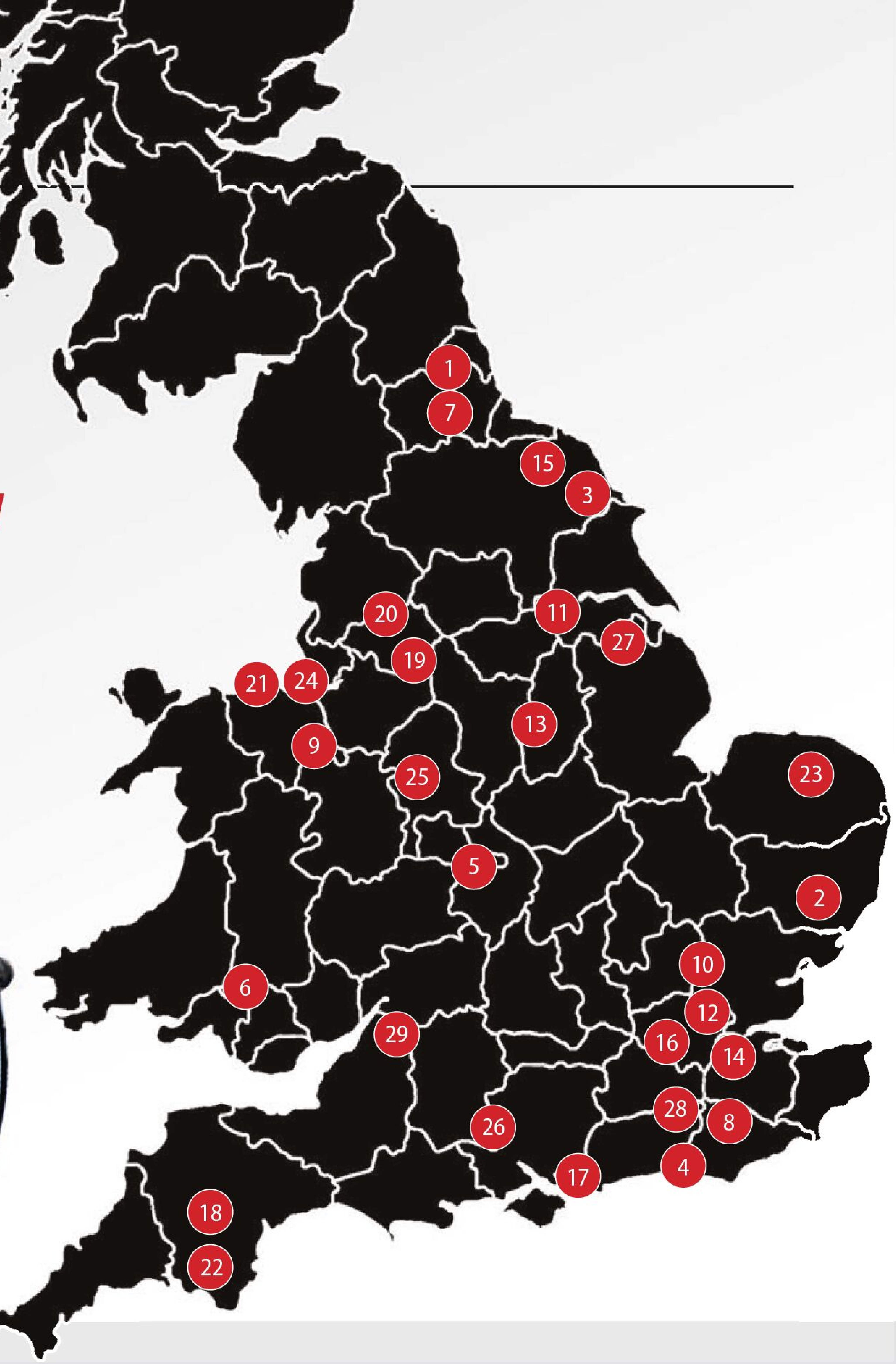

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I AM AN AIRGUNNER

DAVID WALTER

This passionate advocate for red squirrels shares his airgun shooting journey, grey squirrel management activities and why he'd be lost without his thermal spotter

Your earliest memory of airgun shooting is:

I used to borrow a friend's Diana break-barrel air rifle when I was nine or 10 years old. It wasn't very powerful to be honest.

Who taught you to shoot airguns?

I'm self taught.

Go-to airgun range:

I don't use airgun ranges as a routine, but I do check zeros either in my garden or, more specifically, out in the various woodlands where I hunt grey squirrels.

First gun you bought:

BSA Meteor from 1959 after saving money from my Saturday job.

Current airgun:

I'm currently using a BRK Pathfinder .177 sub-12ft/lb.

One gun you wish you owned:

I don't hanker after new rifles, I still use my FX Verminator Mk 1 in .22 FAC. It's more than 22 years old and is still as accurate as the day it started. If I wanted to change then I might be tempted by a BRK Pathfinder .25 in FAC — 30ft/lb is plenty for me.

Favourite accessory:

Trigger sticks and a thermal spotter.

Do you hunt or target shoot?

Hunt, primarily grey squirrels.

> ***" Seeing a healthy red squirrel jumping around in a woodland where the grey squirrels are being controlled is so rewarding "***

How much time do you spend shooting?

Three or four times per week, two to three hours per session.

Greatest achievement:

Being part of the team at British Red Squirrel, setting up its grey squirrel management training course and taking the course around the country to provide training for those interested in removing grey squirrels from woodlands and urban areas.

Why do you shoot?

It is an excellent discipline, and I love being out in the countryside. I don't shoot for any sense of pleasure in killing things, but when the task involves lethal control to be practised and I am able to ensure dispatch with a single well-placed shot (which is what I aim for), it brings some satisfaction in a job well done.

The most satisfying part of shooting:

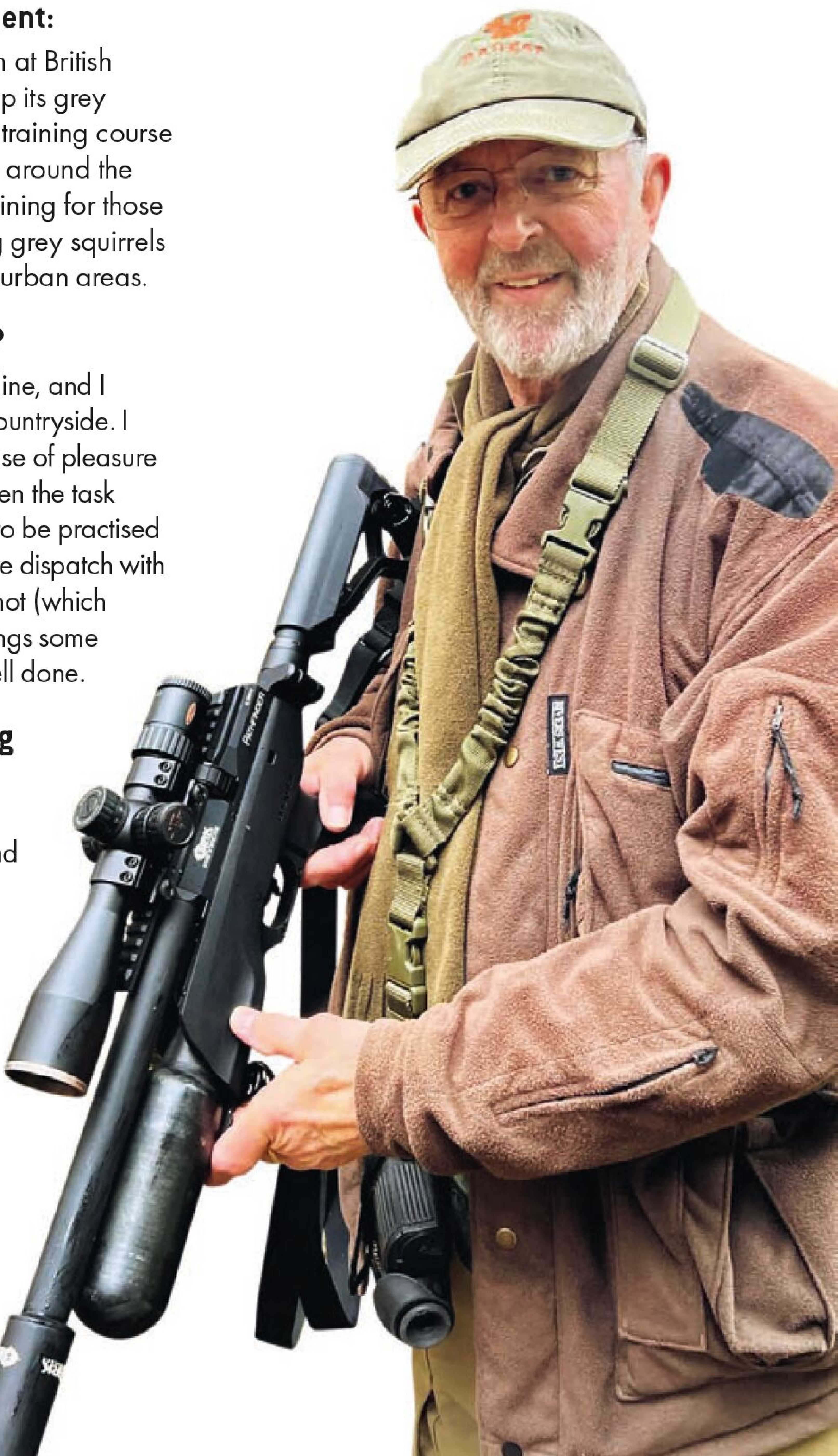
Seeing a healthy red squirrel jumping around in a woodland where the grey squirrels are being controlled to provide a safe place for the red squirrels to thrive.

What don't you enjoy about shooting, if anything?

I enjoy everything about shooting, but if I forget to pick up or charge my thermal spotter, I feel as though I'm working with one hand behind my back.

And lastly, how long have you been a reader of *Airgun World*?

Too many years to remember. I honestly can't remember when I first picked up a copy from the newsagent's shelf. ■



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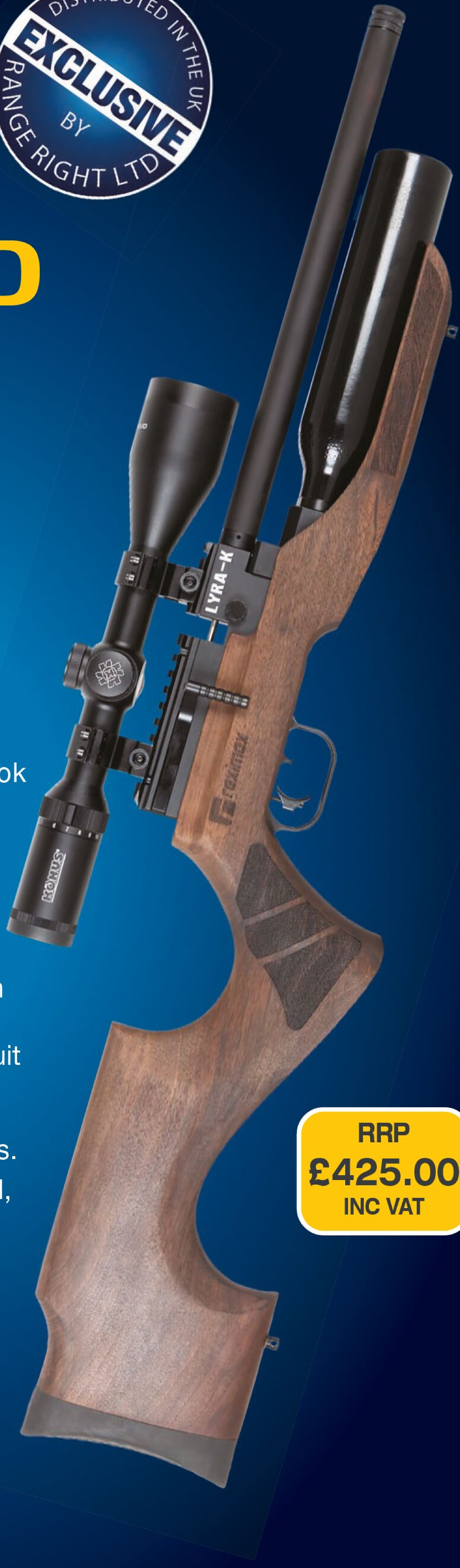

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- Overall length: 880 mm / 35″
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